



A N
A P O L O G Y
FOR THE LIFE OF
COLLEY CIBBER.
COMEDIAN.
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N
MDCCL.



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Colley Cibber, Esq.
late Poet Laureat.

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A N
APOLOGY
FOR THE LIFE OF
COLLEY CIBBER,
COMEDIAN.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

VOL. I.

LONDON

MDCCL.



My Dear Lord
your Lordships most affectionate and faithful serv^t.

H. Pelham

THE RT HON^{BLE} HENRY PELHAM

From an original in the Possession of Crescent Pelham Esq^r



TO A

CERTAIN GENTLEMAN.

*Said to be Hon^{ble} Henry Pelham
Brother to the Duke of Newcastle.*

S I R,

BECAUSE I know it
would give you less Con-
cern, to find your Name
in an impertinent Satyr, than before
the daintiest Dedication of a modern
Author, I conceal it.

Let me talk never so idly to you,
this way ; you are, at least, under no

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necef-

DEDICATION.

necessity of taking it to yourself:
Nor when I boast of your Favours,
need you blush to have bestow'd them.
Or I may now give you all the
Attributes, that raise a wife, and
good-natur'd Man, to Esteem, and
Happiness, and not be censured as a
Flatterer by my own, or your Ene-
mies.—I place my own first; be-
cause as they are the greater Number,
I am afraid of not paying the greater
Respect to them. Yours, if such there
are, I imagine are too well-bred to
declare themselves: But as there is
no Hazard, or visible Terror, in an
Attack, upon my defenceless Station,
my Censurers have generally been Per-
sons of an intrepid Sincerity. Having

DEDICATION.

therefore shut the Door against them, while I am thus privately addressing you, I have little to apprehend, from either of them.

Under this Shelter, then, I may safely tell you, That the greatest Encouragement, I have had to publish this Work, has risen from the several Hours of Patience you have lent me, at the Reading it. It is true, I took the Advantage of your Leisure, in the Country, where moderate Matters serve for Amusement; and there indeed, how far your Good-nature, for an old Acquaintance, or your Reluctance to put the Vanity of an Author out of countenance, may have carried

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you, I cannot be sure; and yet Appearances give me stronger Hopes: For was not the Complaisance of a whole Evening's Attention, as much as an Author of more Importance ought to have expected? Why then was I desired the next Day, to give you a second Lecture? Or why was I kept a third Day, with you, to tell you more of the same Story? If these Circumstances have made me vain, shall I say, Sir, you are accountable for them? No, Sir, I will rather so far flatter myself, as to suppose it possible, That your having been a Lover of the Stage (and one of those few good Judges, who know the Use and Value of it, under a right Regulation) might

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might incline you to think so copious an Account of it a less tedious Amusement, than it may naturally be, to others of different good Sense, who may have less Concern, or Taste for it. But be all this as it may; the Brat is now born, and rather, than see it starve, upon the Bare Parish Provision, I chuse thus clandestinely, to drop it at your Door, that it may exercise One of your many Virtues, your Charity, in supporting it.

If the World were to know, into whose Hands I have thrown it, their Regard to its Patron might incline them to treat it as one of his Family: But in the Consciousness of what

D E D I C A T I O N.

I am, I chuse not, Sir, to say who you are. If your Equal, in Rank, were to do publick Justice to your Character, then, indeed, the Concealment of your Name, might be an unnecessary Diffidence: But am I, Sir, of Consequence enough, in any Guise, to do Honour to Mr. —? were I to set him, in the most laudable Lights, that Truth, and good Sense could give him, or his own Likeness would require; my officious Mite would be lost in that general Esteem, and Regard, which People of the first Consequence, even of different Parties, have a Pleasure in paying him. Encomiums to Superiors from Authors of lower Life, as they are naturally
liable

DEDICATION.

liable to Suspicion, can add very little Lustre, to what before was visible to the publick Eye: Such Offerings (to use the Stile they are generally dressed in) like *Pagan* Incense, evaporate, on the Altar, and rather gratify the Priest, than the Deity.

But you, Sir, are to be approached in Terms, within the Reach of common Sense: The honest Oblation of a chearful Heart, is as much as you desire, or I am able to bring you: A Heart, that has just Sense enough, to mix Respect, with Intimacy, and is never more delighted, than when your rural Hours of Leisure admit me, with all my laughing Spirits, to be my idle
self

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self, and in the whole Day's Possession of you! Then, indeed, I have Reason to be vain; I am, then, distinguished, by a Pleasure too great, to be conceal'd, and could almost pity the Man of graver Merit, that dares not receive it, with the same unguarded Transport! This Nakedness of Temper the World may place, in what Rank of Folly, or Weakness they please; but 'till Wisdom, can give me something, that will make me more heartily happy, I am content, to be gaz'd at, as I am, without lessening my Respect, for those, whose Passions may be more soberly covered.

Yet,

DEDICATION.

Yet, Sir, will I not deceive you; 'tis not the Lustre of your publick Merit, the Affluence of your Fortune, your high Figure in Life, nor those honourable Distinctions, which you had rather deserve than be told of, that have so many years made my plain Heart hang after you: These are but incidental Ornaments, that, 'tis true, may be of Service to you, in the World's Opinion; and though, as one among the Croud, I may rejoice, that Providence has so deservedly bestowed them; yet my particular Attachment has risen from a meer natural, and more engaging Charm, the Agreeable Companion!

DEDICATION.

panion ! Nor is my Vanity half so much gratified, in the *Honour*, as my Sense is in the *Delight* of your Society ! When I see you lay aside the Advantages of Superiority, and by your own Chearfulness of Spirits, call out all that Nature has given me to meet them ; then 'tis I taste you ! then Life runs high ! I desire ! I possess you !

Yet, Sir, in this distinguish'd Happiness, I give not up my farther Share of that Pleasure, or of that Right I have to look upon you, with the publick Eye, and to join in the general Regard so unanimously pay'd to that uncommon Virtue, your *Integrity* ! This, Sir, the World allows so
conspi-

DEDICATION.

conspicuous a Part of your Character, that, however invidious the Merit, neither the rude Licence of Detraction, nor the Prejudice of Party, has ever, once, thrown on it the least Impeachment, or Reproach. This is that commanding Power, that, in publick Speaking, makes you heard with such Attention! This it is, that discourages, and keeps silent the Insinuations of Prejudice, and Suspicion; and almost renders your Eloquence an unnecessary Aid, to your Assertions: Even your Opponents, conscious of your *Integrity*, hear you rather as a Witness, than an Orator——But this, Sir, is drawing you too near the Light, *Integrity* is too particular a Virtue to be
cover'd

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cover'd with a general Application. Let me therefore only talk to you, as at *Tusculum* (for so I will call that sweet Retreat, which your own Hands have rais'd) where like the fam'd Orator of old, when publick Cares permit, you pass so many rational, unbending Hours: There! and at such Times, to have been admitted, still plays in my memory, more like a fictitious, than a real Enjoyment! How many golden Evenings in that Theatrical Paradise of water'd Lawns, and hanging Groves, have I walk'd, and prated down the Sun, in social Happiness! Whether the Retreat of *Cicero*, in Cost, Magnificence, or curious Luxury of Antiquities, might not out-blaze

the

DEDICATION.

the *simplex Munditiis*, the modest Ornaments of your *Villa*, is not within my reading to determine : But that the united Power of Nature, Art, or Elegance of Taste, could have thrown so many varied Objects, into a more delightful Harmony, is beyond my Conception.

When I consider you, in this View, and as the Gentleman of Eminence, furrounded with the general Benevolence of Mankind ; I rejoice, Sir, for you, and for myself ; to see *You*, in this particular Light of Merit, and myself, sometimes, admitted to my more than equal Share of you.

D E D I C A T I O N.

If this *Apology* for my past Life
discourages you not, from holding me,
in your usual Favour, let me quit this
greater Stage, the World, whenever
I may, I shall think This the best-
acted Part of any I have undertaken,
since you first condescended to laugh
with,

S I R,

Your most obedient,

most obliged, and

most humble Servant,

Novemb. 6.
1739.

COLLEY CIBBER.



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A P O L O G Y

FOR THE
LIFE of Mr. COLLEY CIBBER, &c.

C H A P. I.

The Introduction. The Author's Birth. Various Fortune at School. Not lik'd by those he lov'd there. Why. A Digression upon Raillery. The Use and Abuse of it. The Comforts of Folly. Vanity of Greatness. Laughing, no bad Philosophy.



YOU know, Sir, I have often told you, that one time or other I should give the Publick Some Memoirs of my own Life; at which you have never fail'd to laugh, like a Friend, without saying a word to dissuade me from it; concluding, I suppose, that such a wild Thought could not possibly require a serious Answer. But you see

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I was in earnest. And now you will say, the World will find me, under my own Hand, a weaker Man than perhaps I may have pass'd for, even among my Enemies.—With all my Heart! my Enemies will then read me with Pleasure, and you, perhaps, with Envy, when you find that Follies, without the Reproach of Guilt upon them, are not inconsistent with Happiness.—But why make my Follies publick? Why not? I have pass'd my Time very pleasantly with them, and I don't recollect that they have ever been hurtful to any other Man living. Even admitting they were injudiciously chosen, would it not be Vanity in me to take Shame to myself for not being found a Wise Man? Really, Sir, my Appetites were in too much haste to be happy, to throw away my Time in pursuit of a Name I was sure I could never arrive at.

Now the Follies I frankly confess, I look upon as, in some measure, discharged; while those I conceal are still keeping the Account open between me and my Conscience. To me the Fatigue of being upon a continual Guard to hide them, is more than the Reputation of being without them can repay. If this be Weakness, *defendit numerus*, I have such comfortable Numbers on my side, that were all Men to blush, that are not Wise, I am afraid, in Ten, Nine Parts of the World ought to be out of Countenance: But since that sort of Modesty is what they don't care to come into, why should I be afraid of being star'd at, for
not

not being particular? Or if the Particularity lies in owning my Weakness, will my wisest Reader be so inhuman as not to pardon it? But if there should be such a one, let me, at least, beg him to shew me that strange Man, who is perfect! Is any one more unhappy, more ridiculous, than he who is always labouring to be thought so, or that is impatient when he is not thought so? Having brought myself to be easy, under whatever the World may say of my Undertaking, you may still ask me, why I give myself all this Trouble? Is it for Fame, or Profit to myself, or Use or Delight to others? For all these Considerations I have neither Fondness nor Indifference: If I obtain none of them, the Amusement, at worst, will be a Reward that must constantly go along with the Labour. But behind all this, there is something inwardly inciting, which I cannot express in few Words; I must therefore a little make bold with your Patience.

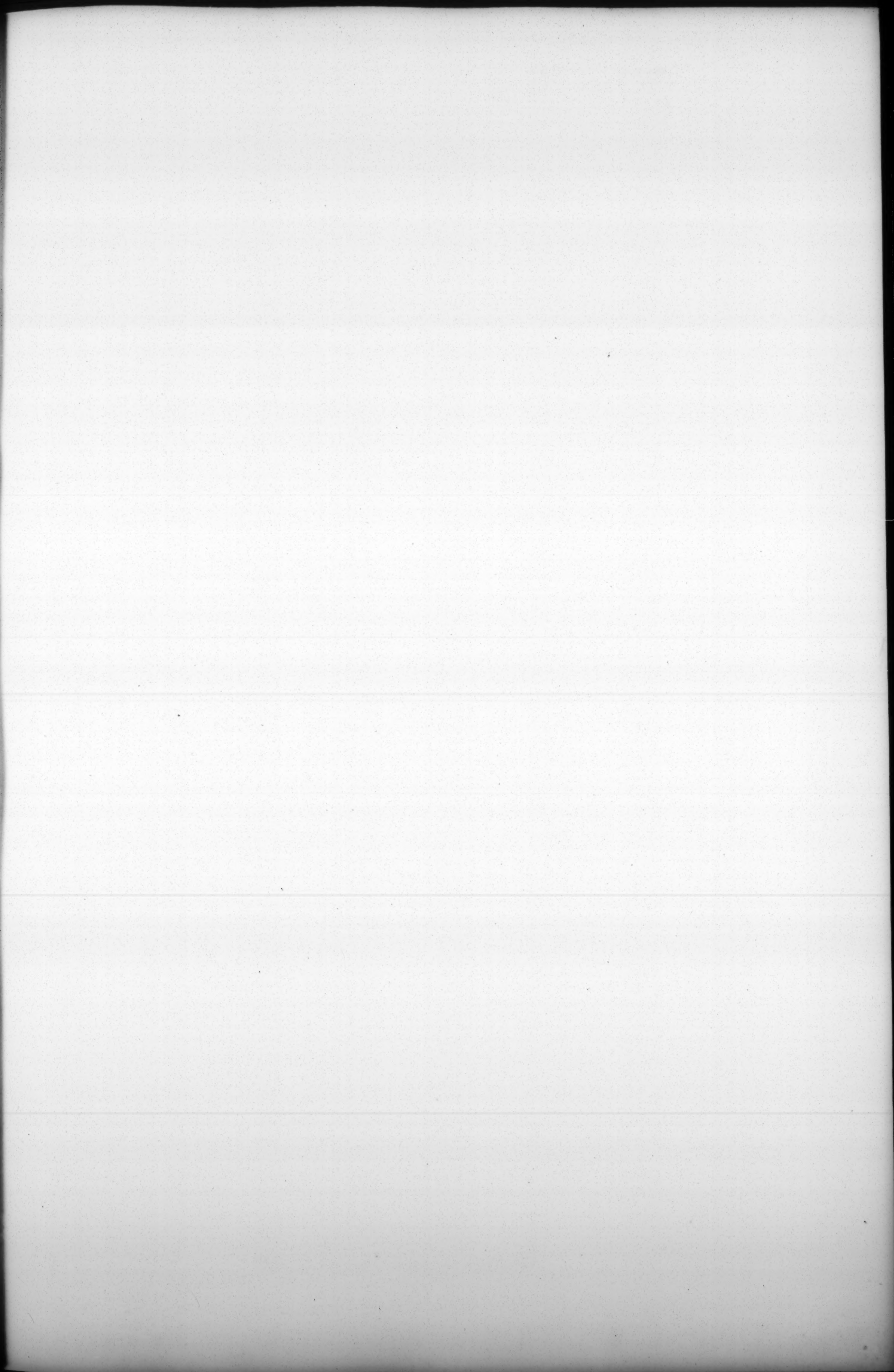
A Man who has pass'd above Forty Years of his Life upon a Theatre, where he has never appear'd to be himself, may have naturally excited the Curiosity of his Spectators to know what he really was, when in no body's Shape but his own; and whether he, who by his Profession had so long been ridiculing his Benefactors, might not, when the Coat of his Profession was off, deserve to be laugh'd at himself; or from his being often seen in the most flagrant, and immoral Characters; whether he might not see as great a Rogue, when

he look'd into the Glas himself, as when he held it to others.

It was doubtless, from a Supposition that this sort of Curiosity wou'd compensate their Labours, that so many hasty Writers have been encourag'd to publish the Lives of the late Mrs. *Oldfield*, Mr. *Wilks*, and Mr. *Booth*, in less time after their Deaths than one could suppose it cost to transcribe them.

Now, Sir, when my Time comes, lest they should think it worth while to handle my Memory with the same Freedom, I am willing to prevent its being so odly besmear'd (or at best but flatly white-wash'd) by taking upon me to give the Publick This, as true a Picture of myself as natural Vanity will permit me to draw: For, to promise you that I shall never be vain, were a Promise that, like a Looking-glass too large, might break itself in the making: Nor am I sure I ought wholly to avoid that Imputation, because if Vanity be one of my natural Features, the Portrait would not be like me without it. In a Word, I may palliate, and soften, as much as I please; but upon an honest Examination of my Heart, I am afraid the same Vanity which makes even homely People employ Painters to preserve a flattering Record of their Persons, has seduced me to print off this *Chiara Oscuro* of my Mind.

And when I have done it, you may reasonably ask me, of what Importance can the History of my private Life be to the Publick? To this, indeed, I can only make you a ludicrous





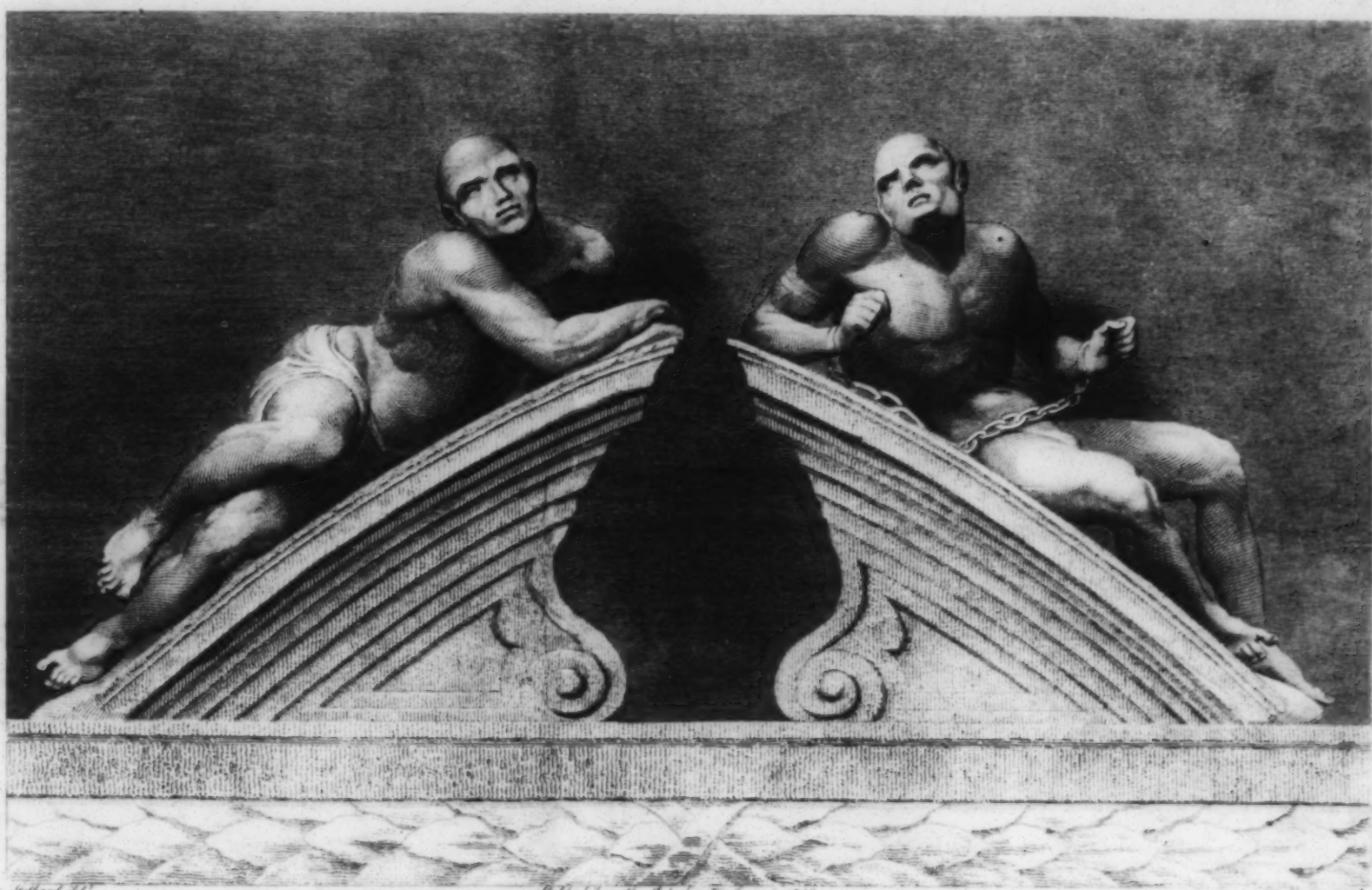
crous Answer, which is, That the Publick very well knows, my Life has not been a private one; that I have been employ'd in their Service, ever since many of their Grandfathers were young Men; And tho' I have voluntarily laid down my Post, they have a sort of Right to enquire into my Conduct, (for which they have so well paid me) and to call for the Account of it, during my Share of Administration in the State of the Theatre. This Work, therefore, which, I hope, they will not expect a Man of hasty Head shou'd confine to any regular Method: (For I shall make no scruple of leaving my History, when I think a Digression may make it lighter, for my Reader's Digestion.) This Work, I say, shall not only contain the various Impressions of my Mind, (as in *Louis the Fourteenth* his Cabinet you have seen the growing Medals of his Person from Infancy to Old Age,) but shall likewise include with them the *Theatrical History of my Own Time*, from my first Appearance on the Stage to my last *Exit*.

If then what I shall advance on that Head, may any ways contribute to the Prosperity or Improvement of the Stage in Being, the Publick must of consequence have a Share in its Utility.

This, Sir, is the best Apology I can make for being my own Biographer. Give me leave therefore to open the first Scene of my Life, from the very Day I came into it; and tho' (considering my Profession) I have no reason to be

assham'd of my Original; yet I am afraid a plain dry Account of it, will scarce admit of a better Excuse than what my Brother *Bayes* makes for Prince *Prettyman* in the *Rehearsal*, viz. *I only do it, for fear I should be thought to be no body's Son at all*; for if I have led a worthless Life, the Weight of my Pedigree will not add an Ounce to my intrinsic Value. But be the Inference what it will, the simple Truth is this.

I was born in *London*, on the 6th of November 1671, in *Southampton-Street*, facing *Southampton-House*. My Father, *Caius Gabriel Cibber*, was a Native of *Holstein*, who came into *England* some time before the Restoration of King *Charles II.* to follow his Profession, which was that of a Statuary, &c. The *Basso Relievo* on the Pedestal of the Great Column in the City, and the two Figures of the *Lunatics*, the *Raving* and the *Melancholy*, over the Gates of *Bethlehem-Hospital*, are no ill Monuments of his Fame as an Artist. My Mother was the Daughter of *William Colley*, Esq; of a very ancient Family of *Glaiston* in *Rutlandshire*, where she was born. My Mother's Brother, *Edward Colley*, Esq; (who gave me my Christian Name) being the last Heir Male of it, the Family is now extinct. I shall only add, that in *Wright's History of Rutlandshire*, publish'd in 1684, the *Colley's* are recorded as Sheriffs and Members of Parliament from the Reign of *Henry VII.* to the latter End of *Charles I.* in whose Cause chiefly Sir *Antony Colley*, my Mother's Grandfather,



BETHLEMI ad portas se tollit dupla columna.
 Εἰκόνα τῶν ἑσπέρων καὶ λείων ἑσπέρων ἑσπέρων.
 Hic calvum ad dextram tristi caput ore reclinat.
 Vix illum ad levam ferrea vincula tenent.
 Dissimilis furor est Stauris, sed utrumque laborem.
 Et genium artificis laudat uterque furor.



father, sunk his Estate from Three Thousand to about Three Hundred *per Annum*.

In the Year 1682, at little more than Ten Years of Age, I was sent to the Free-School of *Grantham* in *Lincolnshire*, where I staid till I got through it, from the lowest Form to the uppermost. And such Learning as that School could give me, is the most I pretend to (which tho' I have not utterly forgot, I cannot say I have much improv'd by Study) but even there I remember I was the same inconsistent Creature I have been ever since! always in full Spirits, in some small Capacity to do right, but in a more frequent Alacrity to do wrong; and consequently often under a worse Character than I wholly deserv'd: A giddy Negligence always possess'd me, and so much, that I remember I was once whipp'd for my *Theme*, tho' my Master told me, at the same time, what was good of it was better than any Boy's in the Form. And (whatever Shame it may be to own it) I have observ'd the same odd Fate has frequently attended the Course of my later Conduct in Life. The unskilful Openness, or in plain Terms, the Indiscretion I have always acted with from my Youth, has drawn more Ill-will towards me, than Men of worse Morals and more Wit might have met with. My Ignorance, and want of Jealousy of Mankind has been so strong, that it is with Reluctance I even yet believe any Person, I am acquainted with, can be capable of Envy, Malice, or Ingratitude: And to shew you what a Mortification it

was to me, in my very boyish Days, to find myself mistaken, give me leave to tell you a School Story.

A great Boy, near the Head taller than myself, in some Wrangle at Play had insulted me; upon which I was fool-hardy enough to give him a Box on the Ear; the Blow was soon return'd with another, that brought me under him, and at his Mercy. Another Lad, whom I really lov'd, and thought a good-natur'd one, cry'd out with some Warmth, to my Antagonist, (while I was down) Beat him, beat him soundly! This so amaz'd me, that I lost all my Spirits to resist, and burst into Tears! When the Fray was over, I took my Friend aside, and ask'd him, how he came to be so earnestly against me? To which, with some glouting Confusion, he reply'd, Because you are always jeering, and making a Jest of me to every Boy in the School. Many a Mischief have I brought upon myself by the same Folly in riper Life. Whatever Reason I had to reproach my Companion's declaring against me, I had none to wonder at it, while I was so often hurting him: Thus I deserv'd his Enmity, by my not having Sense enough to know I *had* hurt him; and he hated me, because he had not Sense enough to know, that I never *intended* to hurt him.

As this is the first remarkable Error of my Life I can recollect, I cannot pass it by without throwing out some further Reflections upon it; whether flat or spirited, new or common, false or true, right or wrong, they will be still my own,

own, and consequently like me; I will therefore boldly go on; for I am only obliged to give you my *own*, and not a *good* Picture, to shew as well the Weakness, as the Strength of my Understanding. It is not on what I write, but on my Reader's Curiosity I rely to be read through: At worst, tho' the Impartial may be tired, the Ill-natured (no small Number) I know will see the bottom of me.

What I observed then, upon my having undesignedly provok'd my School-Friend into an Enemy, is a common Case in Society; Errors of this kind often sour the Blood of Acquaintance into an inconceivable Aversion, where it is little suspected. It is not enough to say of your Raillery, that you intended no Offence; if the Person you offer it to has either a wrong Head, or wants a Capacity to make that Distinction, it may have the same Effect as the Intention of the grossest Injury: And in reality, if you know his Parts are too slow to return it in kind, it is a vain and idle Inhumanity, and sometimes draws the Aggressor into Difficulties not easily got out of: Or, to give the Case more Scope, suppose your Friend may have a passive Indulgence for your Mirth, if you find him silent at it; tho' you were as intrepid as *Cæsar*, there can be no Excuse for your not leaving it off. When you are conscious that your Antagonist can give as well as take, then indeed the smarter the Hit, the more agreeable the Party: A Man of chearful Sense, among Friends, will
+ never

never be grave upon an Attack of this kind, but rather thank you that you have given him a Right to be even with you: There are few Men (tho' they may be Masters of both) that on such occasions had not rather shew their Parts than their Courage, and the Preference is just; a Bull-Dog may have one, and only a Man can have the other. Thus it happens, that in the coarse Merriment of common People, when the Jest begins to swell into earnest; for want of this Election you may observe, he that has least Wit generally gives the first Blow. Now, as among the better sort, a Readiness of Wit is not always a Sign of intrisick Merit; so the want of that Readiness is no Reproach to a Man of plain Sense and Civility, who therefore (methinks) should never have these Lengths of Liberty taken with him. Wit there becomes absurd, if not insolent; ill-natur'd I am sure it is, which Imputation a generous Spirit will always avoid, for the same Reason that a Man of real Honour will never send a Challenge to a Cripple. The inward Wounds that are given by the inconsiderate Insults of Wit, to those that want it, are as dangerous as those given by Oppression to Inferiors; as long in healing, and perhaps never forgiven. There is besides (and little worse than this) a mutual Grossness in Rallery, that sometimes is more painful to the Hearers that are not concerned in it, than to the Persons engaged. I have seen a Couple of these clumsy Combatants drub one another

with as little Manners or Mercy as if they had two Flails in their Hands; Children at Play with Case-knives could not give you more Apprehension of their doing one another a Mischief. And yet, when the Contest has been over, the Boobys have looked round them for Approbation, and upon being told they were admirably well match'd, have sat down (bedaub'd as they were) contented at making it a drawn Battle. After all that I have said, there is no clearer way of giving Rules for Raillery, than by Example.

There are two Persons now living, who, tho' very different in their Manner, are, as far as my Judgment reaches, complete Masters of it; one of a more polite and extensive Imagination, the other of a Knowledge more closely useful to the Business of Life: The one gives you perpetual Pleasure, and seems always to be taking it; the other seems to take none, till his Business is over, and then gives you as much as if Pleasure were his only Business. The one enjoys his Fortune, the other thinks it first necessary to make it; though that he will enjoy it then, I cannot be positive; because when a Man has once picked up more than he wants, he is apt to think it a Weakness to suppose he has enough. But as I don't remember ever to have seen these Gentlemen in the same Company, you must give me leave to take them separately.

The first of them, then, has a Title, and
— no matter what; I am not to speak of
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the great, but the happy Part of his Character, and in this one single Light; not of his being an illustrious, but a delightful Companion.

In Conversation he is seldom silent but when he is attentive, nor ever speaks without exciting the Attention of others; and tho' no Man might with less Displeasure to his Hearers engross the Talk of the Company, he has a Patience in his Vivacity that chuses to divide it, and rather gives more Freedom than he takes; his sharpest Replies having a Mixture of Politeness that few have the Command of; his Expression is easy, short, and clear; a stiff or studied Word never comes from him; it is in a Simplicity of Style that he gives the highest Surprise, and his Ideas are always adapted to the Capacity and Taste of the Person he speaks to: Perhaps you will understand me better, if I give you a particular Instance of it. A Person at the University, who from being a Man of Wit, easily became his Acquaintance there, from that Acquaintance found no Difficulty in being made one of his Chaplains: This Person afterwards leading a Life that did no great Honour to his Cloth, obliged his Patron to take some gentle Notice of it; but as his Patron knew the Patient was squeamish, he was induced to sweeten the Medicine to his Taste, and therefore with a Smile of Good-humour told him, that if to the many Vices he had already, he would give himself the trouble to add one more, he did not
doubt

doubt but his Reputation might still be set up again. Sir *Crape*, who could have no Aversion to so pleasant a Dose, desiring to know what it might be, was answered, *Hypocrisy, Doctor, only a little Hypocrisy!* This plain Reply can need no Comment; but *ex pede Herculem*, he is every where proportionable. I think I have heard him since say, the Doctor thought Hypocrisy so detestable a Sin, that he dy'd without committing it. In a word, this Gentleman gives Spirit to Society the Moment he comes into it, and whenever he leaves it, they who have Business have then leisure to go about it.

Having often had the Honour to be myself the But of his Raillery, I must own I have received more Pleasure from his lively Manner of raising the Laugh against me, than I could have felt from the smoothest Flattery of a serious Civility. Tho' Wit flows from him with as much Ease as common Sense from another, he is so little elated with the Advantage he may have over you, that whenever your good Fortune gives it against him, he seems more pleased with it on your side than his own. The only Advantage he makes of his Superiority of Rank is, that by always waving it himself, his inferior finds he is under the greater Obligation not to forget it.

When the Conduct of social Wit is under such Regulations, how delightful must those *Convivia*, those Meals of Conversation be, where such a Member presides; who can
with

with so much Ease (as *Shakeſpear* phrases it) *ſet the Table in a roar*. I am in no pain that theſe imperfect Out-lines will be applied to the Perſon I mean, becauſe every one who has the Happineſs to know him, muſt know how much more in this particular Attitude is wanting to be like him.

Eſq. The other Gentleman, whoſe bare Interjections of Laughter have Humour in them, is ſo far from having a Title that he has loſt his real Name, which ſome Years ago he ſuffer'd his Friends to railly him out of; in lieu of which they have equipped him with one they thought had a better Sound in good Company. He is the firſt Man of ſo ſociable a Spirit, that I ever knew capable of quitting the Allurements of Wit and Pleaſure, for a ſtrong Application to Buſineſs; in his Youth (for there was a Time when he was young) he ſet out in all the hey-day Expences of a modiſh Man of Fortune; but finding himſelf over-weighted with Appetites, he grew reſtiſh, kick'd up in the middle of the Courſe, and turned his back upon his Frolicks abroad, to think of improving his Eſtate at home: In order to which, he clapt Collars upon his Coach-Horſes, and that their Mettle might not run over other People, he ty'd a Plough to their Tails, which tho' it might give them a more ſlovenly Air, would enable him to keep them fatter in a foot-pace with a whiſtling Peaſant beſide them, than in a full trot, with a hot-headed Coachman behind them. In theſe unpolite Amuſements he has laugh'd like

a Rake, and look'd about him like a Farmer, for many Years. As his Rank and Station often find him in the best Company, his easy Humour, whenever he is called to it, can still make himself the Fiddle of it.

And tho' some say, he looks upon the Follies of the World like too severe a Philosopher, yet he rather chuses to laugh than to grieve at them; to pass his time therefore more easily in it, he often endeavours to conceal himself, by assuming the Air and Taste of a Man in Fashion; so that his only Uneasiness seems to be, that he cannot quite prevail with his Friends to think him a worse Manager, than he really is; for they carry their Raillery to such a Height, that it sometimes rises to a Charge of downright Avarice against him. Upon which Head, it is no easy matter to be more merry upon him, than he will be upon himself. Thus while he sets that Infirmary in a pleasant Light, he so disarms your Prejudice, that if he has it not, you can't find in your Heart to wish he were without it. Whenever he is attacked where he seems to lie so open, if his Wit happens not to be ready for you, he receives you with an assenting Laugh, till he has gained time enough to whet it sharp enough for a Reply, which seldom turns out to his Disadvantage. If you are too strong for him (which may possibly happen from his being obliged to defend the weak side of the Question) his last Resource is to
join

join in the Laugh, till he has got himself off by an ironical Applause of your Superiority.

If I were capable of Envy, what I have observed of this Gentleman would certainly incline me to it; for sure to get through the necessary Cares of Life, with a Train of Pleasures at our Heels, in vain calling after us, to give a constant Preference to the Business of the Day, and yet be able to laugh while we are about it, to make even Society the subservient Reward of it, is a State of Happiness which the gravest Precepts of moral Wisdom will not easily teach us to exceed. When I speak of Happiness, I go no higher than that which is contained in the World we now tread upon; and when I speak of Laughter, I don't simply mean that which every Oaf is capable of, but that which has its sensible Motive and proper Season, which is not more limited than recommended by that indulgent Philosophy,

Cum ratione insanire.

When I look into my present Self, and afterwards cast my Eye round all my Hopes, I don't see any one Pursuit of them that should so reasonably rouse me out of a Nod in my Great Chair, as a Call to those agreeable Parties I have sometimes the Happiness to mix with, where I always assert the equal Liberty of leaving them, when my Spirits have done their best with them.

Now, Sir, as I have been making my way for above Forty Years through a Crowd of Cares,

Cares, (all which, by the Favour of Providence, I have honestly got rid of) is it a time of Day for me to leave off these Fooleries, and to set up a new Character? Can it be worth my while to waste my Spirits, to bake my Blood, with serious Contemplations, and perhaps impair my Health, in the fruitless Study of advancing myself into the better Opinion of those very—very few Wise Men that are as old as I am? No, the Part I have acted in real Life, shall be all of a piece,

—*Servetur ad imum,
Qualis ab incepto processerit.* Hor.

I will not go out of my Character, by straining to be wiser than I *can* be, or by being more affectedly pensive than I *need* be; whatever I am, Men of Sense will know me to be, put on what Disguise I will; I can no more put off my Follies, than my Skin; I have often try'd, but they stick too close to me; nor am I sure my Friends are displeased with them; for, besides that in this Light I afford them frequent matter of Mirth, they may possibly be less uneasy at their *own* Foibles, when they have so old a Precedent to keep them in Countenance: Nay, there are some frank enough to confess, they envy what they laugh at; and when I have seen others, whose Rank and Fortune have laid a sort of Restraint upon their Liberty of pleasing their Company, by pleasing themselves, I have said softly to myself,—Well, there is some Advantage in having neither Rank nor

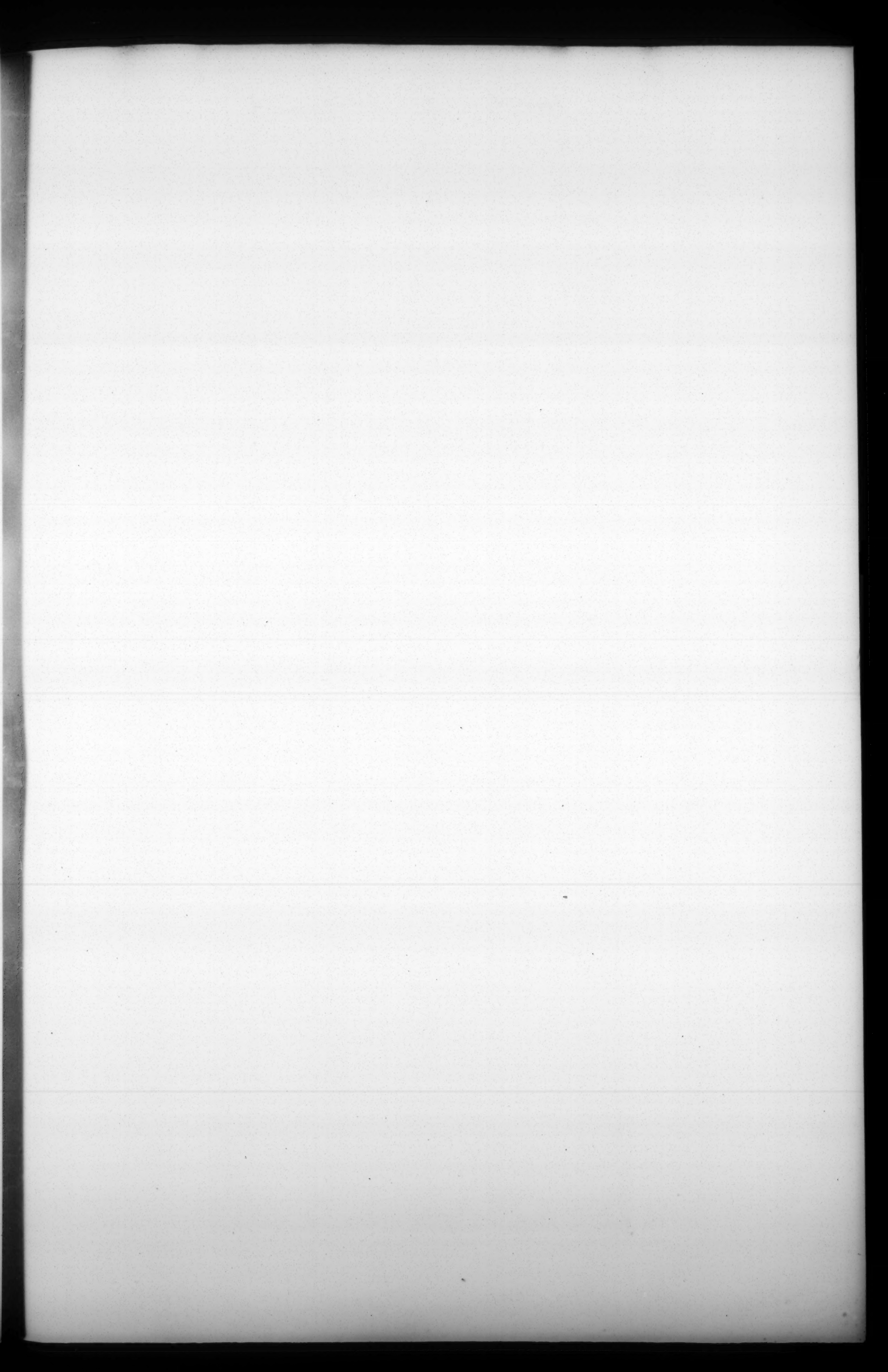
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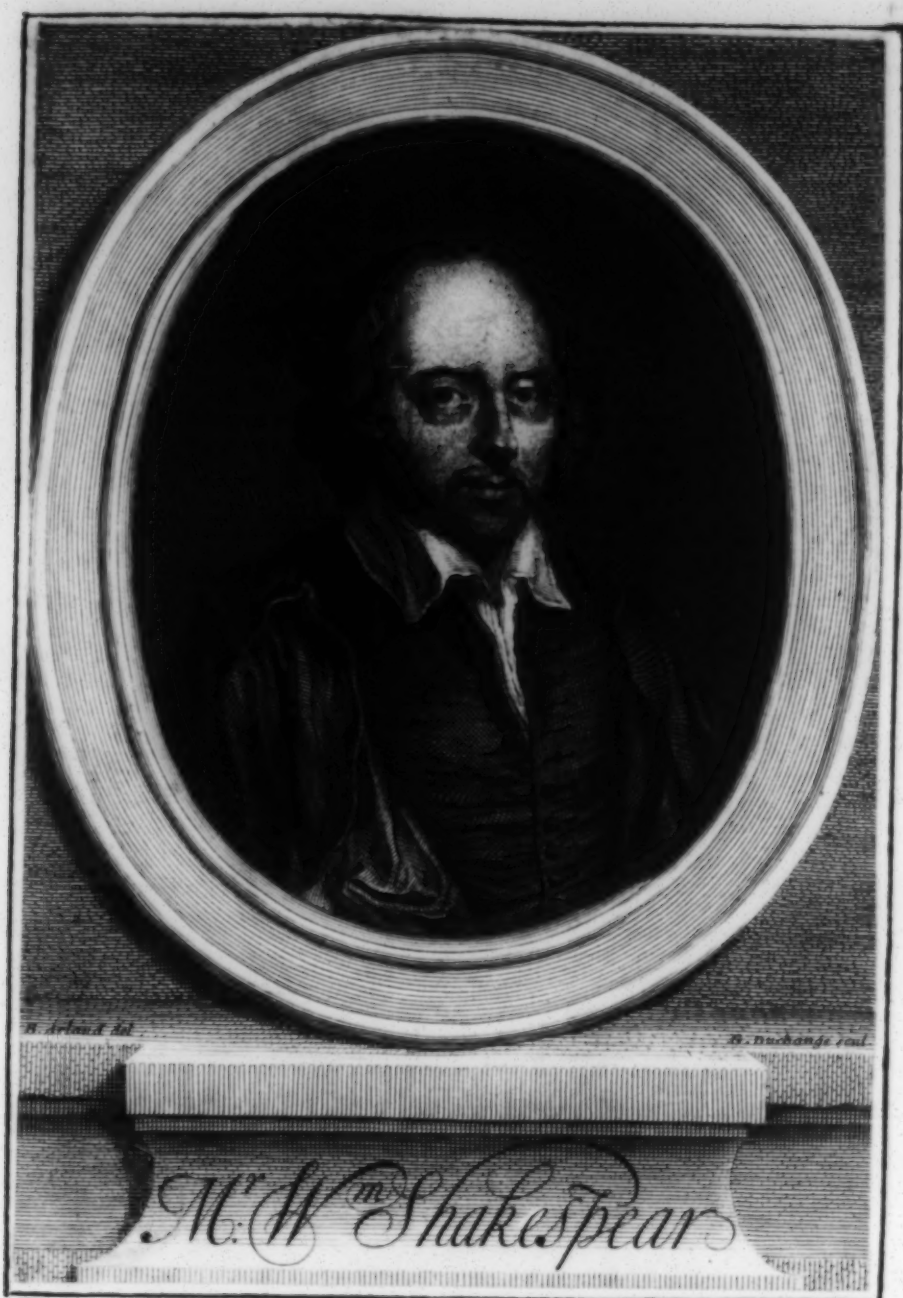
Fortune!

Fortune! Not but there are among them a third Sort, who have the particular Happiness of unbending into the very Wantonness of Good-humour, without depreciating their Dignity: He that is not Master of that Freedom, let his Condition be never so exalted, must still want something to come up to the Happiness of his Inferiors who enjoy it. If *Socrates* cou'd take pleasure in playing at *Even or Odd* with his Children, or *Agésilas* divert himself in riding the Hobby-horse with them, am I oblig'd to be as eminent as either of them before I am as frolicksome? If the Emperor *Adrian*, near his death, cou'd play with his very Soul, his *Animula*, &c. and regret that it cou'd be no longer companionable; if Greatness, at the same time was not the Delight he was so loth to part with, sure then these chearful Amusements I am contending for, must have no inconsiderable share in our Happiness; he that does not chuse to live his own way, suffers others to chuse for him. Give me the Joy I always took in the End of an old Song,

My Mind, my Mind is a Kingdom to me!

If I can please myself with my own Follies, have not I a plentiful Provision for Life? If the World thinks me a Trifler, I don't desire to break in upon their Wisdom; let them call me any Fool, but an Uncheerful one; I live as I write; while my Way amuses me, it's as well as I wish it; when another writes better, I can like him too, tho' he shou'd not like me. Not
our





our great Imitator of *Horace* himself can have more Pleasure in writing his Verses, than I have in reading them, tho' I sometimes find myself there (as *Shakespeare* terms it) *dispraisingly* spoken of: If he is a little free with me, I am generally in good Company, he is as blunt with my Betters; so that even here I might laugh in my turn. My Superiors, perhaps, may be mended by him; but, for my part, I own myself incorrigible: I look upon my Follies as the best part of my Fortune, and am more concern'd to be a good Husband of Them, than of That; nor do I believe I shall ever be rhim'd out of them. And, if I don't mistake, I am supported in my way of thinking by *Horace* himself, who, in excuse of a loose Writer, says,

*Prætulerim scriptor delirus, inersque videri,
Dum mea delectent, mala me, aut denique
fallant,*

Quam sapere, et ringi——

which, to speak of myself as a loose Philosopher, I have thus ventur'd to imitate:

*Me, while my laughing Follies can deceive,
Blest in the dear Delirium let me live,
Rather than wisely know my Wants and grieve.* }

We had once a merry Monarch of our own, who thought Chearfulness so valuable a Blessing, that he would have quitted one of his Kingdoms where he cou'd not enjoy it; where, among many other Conditions they had ty'd him to, his sober Subjects wou'd not suffer him to laugh

on a *Sunday*; and tho' this might not be the avow'd Cause of his Elopement, I am not sure, had he had no other, that this alone might not have serv'd his turn; at least, he has my hearty Approbation either way; for had I been under the same Restriction, tho' my staying were to have made me his Successor, I shou'd rather have chosen to follow him.

How far his Subjects might be in the right, is not my Affair to determine; perhaps they were wiser than the Frogs in the Fable, and rather chose to have a Log, than a Stork for their King; yet I hope it will be no Offence to say, that King *Log* himself must have made but a very simple Figure in History.

The Man who chuses never to laugh, or whose becalm'd Passions know no Motion, seems to me only in the quiet State of a green Tree; he vegetates, 'tis true, but shall we say he lives? Now, Sir, for Amusement.—Reader, take heed! for I find a strong impulse to talk impertinently; if therefore you are not as fond of seeing, as I am of shewing myself in all my Lights, you may turn over two Leaves together, and leave what follows to those who have more Curiosity, and less to do with their Time, than you have.—As I was saying then, let us, for Amusement, advance this, or any other Prince, to the most glorious Throne, mark out his Empire in what Clime you please, fix him on the highest Pinnacle of unbounded Power; and in that State let us enquire into his degree of Happiness; make him at once the Terror
and

and the Envy of his Neighbours, send his Ambition out to War, and gratify it with extended Fame and Victories; bring him in triumph home, with great unhappy Captives behind him, through the Acclamations of his People, to repossess his Realms in Peace. Well, when the Dust has been brushed from his Purple, what will he do next? Why, this envy'd Monarch (who, we will allow to have a more exalted Mind than to be delighted with the trifling Flatteries of a congratulating Circle) will chuse to retire, I presume, to enjoy in private the Contemplation of his Glory; an Amusement, you will say, that well becomes his Station! But there, in that pleasing Ruminatation, when he has made up his new Account of Happiness, how much, pray, will be added to the Balance more than as it stood before his last Expedition? From what one Article will the Improvement of it appear? Will it arise from the conscious Pride of having done his weaker Enemy an Injury? Are his Eyes so dazzled with false Glory, that he thinks it a less Crime in him to break into the Palace of his Princely Neighbour, because he gave him time to defend it, than for a Subject feloniously to plunder the House of a private Man? Or is the Outrage of Hunger and Necessity more enormous than the Ravage of Ambition? Let us even suppose the wicked Usage of the World, as to that Point, may keep his Conscience quiet; still, what is he to do with the infinite Spoil that his imperial Rapine has brought home? Is he

to sit down, and vainly deck himself with the Jewels which he has plunder'd from the Crown of another, whom Self-defence had compell'd to oppose him? No, let us not debase his Glory into so low a Weakness. What Appetite, then, are these shining Treasures food for? Is their vast Value in seeing his vulgar Subjects stare at them, wise Men smile at them, or his Children play with them? Or can the new Extent of his Dominions add a Cubit to his Happiness? Was not his Empire wide enough before to do good in? And can it add to his Delight that now no Monarch has such room to do mischief in? But farther; if even the great *Augustus*, to whose Reign such Praises are given, cou'd not enjoy his Days of Peace, free from the Terrors of repeated Conspiracies, which lost him more Quiet to suppress, than his Ambition cost him to provoke them. What human Eminence is secure? In what private Cabinet then must this wondrous Monarch lock up his Happiness, that common Eyes are never to behold it? Is it, like his Person, a Prisoner to its own Superiority? Or does he at last poorly place it in the Triumph of his injurious Devastations? One Moment's Search into himself will plainly shew him, that real and reasonable Happiness can have no Existence without Innocence and Liberty. What a Mockery is Greatness without them? How lonesome must be the Life of that Monarch, who, while he governs only by being fear'd, is restrain'd from letting down his Grandeur sometimes to forget himself, and
to

to humanize him into the Benevolence and Joy of Society? To throw off his cumbersome Robe of Majesty to be a Man without Disguise, to have a sensible Taste of Life in its Simplicity, till he confess, from the sweet Experience, that *dulce est desipere in loco*, was no Fool's Philosophy. Or if the gawdy Charms of Pre-eminence are so strong that they leave him no Sense of a less pompous, tho' a more rational Enjoyment, none sure can envy him, but those who are the Dupes of an equally fantastick Ambition.

My Imagination is quite heated and fatigued, in dressing up this Phantome of Felicity; but I hope it has not made me so far misunderstood, as not to have allow'd, that in all the Dispensations of Providence, the Exercise of a great and virtuous Mind is the most elevated State of Happiness: No, Sir, I am not for setting up Gaiety against Wisdom; nor for preferring the Man of Pleasure to the Philosopher; but for shewing, that the Wisest, or greatest Man, is very near an unhappy Man, if the unbending Amusements I am contending for, are not sometimes admitted to relieve him.

How far I may have over-rated these Amusements, let graver Casuists decide; whether they affirm, or reject, what I have asserted, hurts not my Purpose; which is not to give Laws to others; but to shew by what Laws I govern myself: If I am misguided, 'tis Nature's Fault, and I follow her, from this Persuasion; That as Nature has distinguish'd our Species from

the mute Creation, by our Rifibility, her Design must have been, by that Faculty, as evidently to raise our Happiness, as by our *O's Sublime* (our erected Faces) to lift the Dignity of our Form above them.

Notwithstanding all I have said, I am afraid there is an absolute Power, in what is simply call'd our Constitution, that will never admit of other Rules for Happiness, than her own; from which (be we never so wise or weak) without Divine Assistance, we only can receive it; So that all this my Parade, and Grimace of Philosophy, has been only making a mighty Merit of following my own Inclination. A very natural Vanity! Though it is some sort of Satisfaction to know it does not impose upon me. Vanity again! However, think it what you will that has drawn me into this copious Digression, 'tis now high time to drop it: I shall therefore in my next Chapter return to my School, from whence, I fear, I have too long been Truant.





CHAP. II.

He that writes of himself, not easily tir'd. Boys may give Men Lessons. The Author's Preferment at School attended with Misfortunes. The Danger of Merit among Equals. Of Satyrists and Backbiters. What effect they have had upon the Author. Stanzas published by himself against himself.

IT often makes me smile, to think how contentedly I have set myself down, to write my own Life; nay, and with less Concern for what may be said of it, than I should feel, were I to do the same for a deceased Acquaintance. This you will easily account for, when you consider, that nothing gives a Coxcomb more delight, than when you suffer him to talk of himself; which sweet Liberty I here enjoy for a whole Volume together! A Privilege which neither could be allowed me, nor would become me to take, in the Company I am generally admitted to; but here, when I have all the Talk to myself, and have no body to interrupt and contradict me, sure, to say whatever I have a mind other People should know of me, is a Pleasure which none but Authors, as vain as myself, can conceive. — But to my History.

However little worth notice the Life of a School-boy may be supposed to contain, yet,
as

as the Passions of Men and Children have much the same Motives, and differ very little in their Effects, unless where the elder Experience may be able to conceal them : As therefore what arises from the Boy, may possibly be a Lesson to the Man, I shall venture to relate a Fact, or two, that happened while I was still at School.

In *February*, 1684-5, died King *Charles II.* who being the only King I had ever seen, I remember (young as I was) his Death made a strong Impression upon me, as it drew Tears from the Eyes of Multitudes, who looked no further into him than I did : But it was, then, a sort of School-Doctrine to regard our Monarch as a Deity ; as in the former Reign it was to insist he was accountable to this World, as well as to that above him. But what, perhaps, gave King *Charles II.* this peculiar Possession of so many Hearts, was his affable and easy Manner in conversing ; which is a Quality that goes farther with the greater Part of Mankind than many higher Virtues, which, in a Prince, might more immediately regard the publick Prosperity. Even his indolent Amusement of playing with his Dogs, and feeding his Ducks, in *St. James's Park*, (which I have seen him do) made the common People adore him, and consequently overlook in him, what, in a Prince of a different Temper, they might have been out of humour at.

I cannot help remembering one more Particular in those Times, tho' it be quite foreign
to



Carolus. II. D. G. Mag. Brit. Fran. & Hiber Rex. ~
W. Herwin. sc.

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The Effigies of the Right
 Hon.^{ble} Henry Bennet Earle
 of the Baron of Arlington Viscount
 of the order of the Garter Lord
 Household and one of the Lords
 privy Councell &c.^{le}



Hon.^{ble} Henry Bennet Earle
 The Hon.^{ble} Knight of the most
 Chamberlaine of his Ma.^{ty}
 of his most Honourable

to what will follow. I was carried by my Father to the Chapel in *Whitehall*; where I saw the King, and his Royal Brother the then Duke of *York*, with him in the Cloſet, and preſent during the whole Divine Service. Such Diſpenſation, it ſeems, for his Intereſt, had that unhappy Prince, from his real Religion, to aſſiſt at another, to which his Heart was ſo utterly averſe.—I now proceed to the Facts I promiſed to ſpeak of.

King *Charles* his Death was judg'd, by our School-maſter, a proper Subject to lead the Form I was in, into a higher kind of Exerciſe; he therefore enjoin'd us, ſeverally, to make his Funeral Oration: This ſort of Taſk, ſo entirely new to us all, the Boys received with Aſtoniſhment, as a Work above their Capacity; and tho' the Maſter perſiſted in his Command, they one and all, except myſelf, reſolved to decline it. But I, Sir, who was ever giddily forward, and thoughtleſs of Conſequences, ſet myſelf roundly to work, and got through it as well as I could. I remember to this Hour, that ſingle Topick of his Affability (which made me mention it before) was the chief Motive that warmed me into the Undertaking; and to ſhew how very childiſh a Notion I had of his Character at that time, I raiſed his Humanity, and Love of thoſe who ſerv'd him, to ſuch Height, that I imputed his Death to the Shock he received from the Lord *Arlington's* being at the point of Death, about a Week before him. This Oration,

ſuch

such as it was, I produc'd the next Morning: All the other Boys pleaded their Inability, which the Master taking rather as a Mark of their Modesty than their Idleness, only seemed to punish, by setting me at the Head of the Form: A Preferment dearly bought! Much happier had I been to have sunk my Performance in the general Modesty of declining it. A most uncomfortable Life I led among them, for many a Day after! I was so jeer'd, laugh'd at, and hated as a pragmatistical Bastard (School-boys Language) who had betray'd the whole Form, that scarce any of them would keep me company; and tho' i so far advanced me into the Master's Favour that he would often take me from the School, to give me an Airing with him on Horseback, while they were left to their Lessons; you may be sure such envy'd Happiness did not encrease their Goodwill to me: Notwithstanding which, my Stupidity could take no warning from their Treatment. An Accident of the same Nature happen'd soon after, that might have frighten'd a Boy of a meek Spirit from attempting any thing above the lowest Capacity. On the 23^d of *April* following, being the Coronation-Day of the new King, the School petition'd the Master for leave to play; to which he agreed, provided any of the Boys would produce an *English* Ode upon that Occasion.—The very Word, *Ode*, I know, makes you smile already; and so it does me; not only because it still makes so many poor Devils turn Wits upon it,

but from a more agreeable Motive; from a Reflection of how little I then thought that, half a Century afterwards, I should be called upon twice a Year, by my Post, to make the same kind of Oblations to an *unexceptionable* Prince, the serene Happiness of whose Reign my halting Rhimes are still so unequal to.—

This, I own, is Vanity without Disguise; but, *Hæc olim meminisse juvat*: The Remembrance of the miserable Prospect we had then before us, and have since escaped by a Revolution, is now a Pleasure, which, without that Remembrance, I could not so heartily have enjoyed. The Ode I was speaking of fell to my Lot, which, in about half an Hour I produced. I cannot say it was much above the merry Stile of *Sing! Sing the Day, and sing the Song*, in the Farce: Yet bad as it was, it served to get the School a Play-day, and to make me not a little vain upon it; which last Effect so disgusted my Play-fellows, that they left me out of the Party I had most a mind to be of in that Day's Recreation. But their Ingratitude serv'd only to increase my Vanity; for I considered them as so many beaten Tits, that had just had the Mortification of seeing my Hack of a *Pegasus* come in before them. This low Passion is so rooted in our Nature, that sometimes riper Heads cannot govern it. I have met with much the same silly sort of Coldness, even from my Contemporaries of the Theatre, from having the superfluous

perfluous Capacity of writing myself the Characters I have acted.

Here, perhaps, I may again seem to be vain; but if all these Facts are true (as true they are) how can I help it? Why am I obliged to conceal them? The Merit of the best of them is not so extraordinary as to have warn'd me to be nice upon it; and the Praise due to them is so small a Fish, it was scarce worth while to throw my Line into the Water for it. If I confess my Vanity while a Boy, can it be Vanity, when a Man, to remember it? And if I have a tolerable Feature, will not that as much belong to my Picture as an Imperfection? In a word, from what I have mentioned, I would observe only this; That when we are conscious of the least comparative Merit in ourselves, we should take as much Care to conceal the Value we set upon it, as if it were a real Defect: To be elated, or vain upon it, is shewing your Money before People in want; ten to one, but some who may think you have too much, may borrow, or pick your Pocket before you get home. He who assumes Praise to himself, the World will think, overpays himself. Even the Suspicion of being vain, ought as much to be dreaded as the Guilt itself. *Cæsar* was of the same Opinion in regard to his Wife's Chastity. Praise, tho' it may be our Due, is not like a *Bank-Bill*, to be paid upon Demand; to be valuable, it must be voluntary. When we are dun'd for it, we have a Right

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and

and Privilege to refuse it. If Compulsion insists upon it, it can only be paid as Persecution in Points of Faith is, in a counterfeit Coin. And who, ever, believ'd occasional Conformity to be sincere? *Nero*, the most vain Coxcomb of a Tyrant that ever breath'd, cou'd not raise an unfeigned Applause of his Harp by military Execution; even where Praise is deserv'd, Ill-nature and Self-conceit (Passions that poll a Majority of Mankind) will with less Reluctance part with their Money than their Approbation. Men of the greatest Merit are forced to stay 'till they die, before the World will fairly make up their Account: Then, indeed, you have a Chance for your full Due, because it is less grudg'd when you are incapable of enjoying it: Then, perhaps, even Malice shall heap Praises upon your Memory; tho' not for your Sake, but that your surviving Competitors may suffer by a Comparison. 'Tis from the same Principle that *Satyr* shall have a thousand Readers, where *Panegyric* has one. When I therefore find my Name at length, in the Satyrical Works of our most celebrated living Author, I never look upon those Lines as Malice meant to me, (for he knows I never provok'd it) but Profit to himself: One of his Points must be, to have many Readers: He considers that my Face and Name are more known than those of many thousands of more Consequence in the Kingdom: That therefore, right or wrong, a Lick at the *Laureat* will always be a sure Bait, *ad captandum vulgus*, to catch

catch him little Readers: And that to gratify the Unlearned, by now and then interspersing those merry Sacrifices of an old Acquaintance to their Taste, is a Piece of quite right Poetical Craft.

But as a little bad Poetry, is the greatest Crime, he lays to my Charge, I am willing to subscribe to his Opinion of *it*. That this sort of Wit is one of the easiest ways too, of pleasing the generality of Readers, is evident from the comfortable Subsistence which our weekly Retailers of Politicks have been known to pick up, merely by making bold with a Government that had unfortunately neglected to find their Genius a better Employment.

Hence too arises all that flat Poverty of Censure and Invektive, that so often has a Run in our publick Papers, upon the Success of a new Author; when, God knows, there is seldom above one Writer among hundreds in Being at the same time, whose Satyr a Man of common Sense ought to be mov'd at. When a Master in the Art is angry, then indeed, we ought to be alarm'd! How terrible a Weapon is Satyr in the Hand of a great Genius? Yet even there, how liable is Prejudice to misuse it? How far, when general, it may reform our Morals, or what Cruelties it may inflict by being angrily particular, is perhaps above my reach to determine. I shall therefore only beg leave to interpose what I feel for others, whom it may personally have fallen upon. When I read those mortifying Lines of our most eminent

nent Author, in his Character of *Atticus* (*Atticus*, whose Genius in Verse, and whose Morality in Prose, has been so justly admir'd) though I am charm'd with the Poetry, my Imagination is hurt at the Severity of it; and tho' I allow the Satyrist to have had personal Provocation, yet, methinks, for that very Reason, he ought not to have troubled the Public with it: For, as it is observed in the 242d *Tatler*, "In all Terms of Reproof, where the Sentence appears to arise from personal Hatred, or Passion, it is not then made the Cause of Mankind, but a Misunderstanding between two Persons." But if such kind of Satyr has its incontestable Greatness; if its exemplary Brightness may not mislead inferior Wits into a barbarous Imitation of its Severity, then I have only admired the Verses, and exposed myself, by bringing them under so scrupulous a Reflection: But the Pain which the Acrimony of those Verses gave me, is, in some measure, allayed, in finding that this inimitable Writer, as he advances in Years, has since had Candor enough to celebrate the same Person for his visible Merit. Happy Genius! whose Verse, like the Eye of Beauty, can heal the deepest Wounds with the least Glance of Favour.

Since I am got so far into this Subject, you must give me leave to go thro' all I have a mind to say upon it; because I am not sure, that in a more proper Place, my Memory may be so full of it. I cannot find, therefore, from what Reason Satyr is allowed more

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Licence

Licence than Comedy, or why either of them (to be admired) ought not to be limited by Decency and Justice. Let *Juvenal* and *Aristophanes* have taken what Liberties they please, if the Learned have nothing more than their Antiquity to justify their laying about them at that enormous Rate, I shall wish they had a better Excuse for them! The personal Ridicule and Scurrility thrown upon *Socrates*, which *Plutarch* too condemns; and the Boldness of *Juvenal*, in writing real Names over guilty Characters, I cannot think are to be pleaded in right of our modern Liberties of the same kind. *Facit indignatio versum*, may be a very spirited Expression, and seems to give a Reader Hopes of a lively Entertainment: But I am afraid Reproof is in unequal Hands, when Anger is its Executioner; and tho' an outrageous Invective may carry some Truth in it, yet it will never have that natural, easy Credit with us, which we give to the laughing Ironies of a cool Head. The Satyr that can smile *circum præcordia ludit*, and seldom fails to bring the Reader quite over to his Side, whenever Ridicule and Folly are at variance. But when a Person satyriz'd is used with the extreamest Rigour, he may sometimes meet with Compassion, instead of Contempt, and throw back the Odium that was designed for him, upon the Author. When I would therefore disarm the Satyrift of this Indignation, I mean little more, than that I would take from him all private or personal Prejudice, and would still leave

leave him as much general Vice to scourge as he pleases, and that with as much Fire and Spirit as Art and Nature demand to enliven his Work, and keep his Reader awake.

Against all this it may be objected, That these are Laws which none but phlegmatic Writers will observe, and only Men of Eminence should give. I grant it, and therefore only submit them to Writers of better Judgment. I pretend not to restrain others from chusing what I don't like; they are welcome (if they please too) to think I offer these Rules, more from an Incapacity to break them, than from a moral Humanity. Let it be so! still, That will not weaken the Strength of what I have asserted, if my Assertion be true. And though I allow, that Provocation is not apt to weigh out its Resentments by Drachms and Scruples, I shall still think that no public Revenge can be honourable, where it is not limited by Justice; and if Honour is insatiable in its Revenge, it loses what it contends for, and sinks itself, if not into Cruelty, at least into Vain-glory.

This so singular Concern which I have shewn for others, may naturally lead you to ask me, what I feel for myself, when I am unfavourably treated by the elaborate Authors of our daily Papers. Shall I be sincere, and own my Frailty? its usual Effect is to make me vain! For I consider, if I were quite good for nothing, these Pidlars in Wit would not be concerned to take me to pieces, or (not to

be quite so vain) when they moderately charge me with only Ignorance, or Dulness, I see nothing in That, which an honest Man need be ashamed of: There is many a good Soul, who, from those sweet Slumbers of the Brain, are never awaken'd by the least harmful Thought; and I am sometimes tempted to think those Retailers of Wit may be of the same Class; that what they write proceeds not from Malice, but Industry; and that I ought no more to reproach them than I would a Lawyer that pleads against me for his Fee; that their Detraction, like Dung, thrown upon a Meadow, tho' it may seem at first to deform the Prospect, in a little time it will disappear of itself, and leave an involuntary Crop of Praise behind it.

When they confine themselves to a sober Criticism upon what I write; if their Censure is just, what Answer can I make to it? If it is unjust, why should I suppose that a sensible Reader will not see it, as well as myself? Or, admit I were able to expose them, by a laughing Reply, will not that Reply beget a Rejoinder? And though they might be Gainers, by having the worst on't, in a Paper War, that is no Temptation for me to come into it. Or (to make both sides less considerable) would not my bearing Ill-language, from a Chimney-sweeper, do me less Harm, than it would be to box with him, tho' I were sure to beat him? Nor indeed is the little Reputation I have as an Author,

worth

worth the Trouble of a Defence. Then, as no Criticism can possibly make me worse than I really am; so nothing I can say of myself can possibly make me better: When therefore a determined Critick comes arm'd with Wit and Outrage, to take from me that small Pittance I have, I wou'd no more dispute with him, than I wou'd resist a Gentleman of the Road, to save a little Pocket-Money. Men that are in want themselves, seldom make a Conscience of taking it from others. Whoever thinks I have too much, is welcome to what Share of it he pleases: Nay, to make him more merciful (as I partly guess the worst he can say of what I now write) I will prevent even the Imputation of his doing me Injustice, and honestly say it myself, viz. That of all the Assurances I was ever guilty of, this, of writing my own Life is the most hardy. I beg his Pardon!——Impudent is what I should have said! That through every Page there runs a Vein of Vanity and Impertinence, which no *French Ensigns memoires* ever came up to; but, as this is a common Error, I presume the Terms of *Doating Trifler*, *Old Fool*, or *Conceited Coxcomb*, will carry Contempt enough for an impartial Cenfor to bestow on me; that my Style is unequal, pert, and frothy, patch'd and party-colour'd, like the Coat of an *Harlequin*; low and pompous, cramm'd with Epithets, strew'd with Scraps of second-hand *Latin* from common Quotations; frequently aiming at Wit, without

ever hitting the Mark; a mere Ragouft, tofs'd up from the Offals of other Authors: My Subject below all Pens but my own, which, whenever I keep to, is flatly daub'd by one eternal Egotism: That I want nothing but Wit, to be as an accomplish'd a Coxcomb here, as ever I attempted to expose on the Theatre: Nay, that this very Confession is no more a Sign of my Modesty, than it is a Proof of my Judgment; that, in short, you may roundly tell me, that—*Cinna (or Cibber) vult videri Pauper, et est Pauper.*

*When humble Cinna cries, I'm poor and low,
You may believe him—he is really so.*

Well, Sir Critick! and what of all this? Now I have laid myself at your Feet, what will you do with me? Expose me? Why, dear Sir, does not every Man that writes expose himself? Can you make me more ridiculous than Nature has made me? You cou'd not sure suppose, that I would lose the Pleasure of Writing, because you might possibly judge me a Blockhead, or perhaps might pleasantly tell other People they ought to think me so too. Will not they judge as well from what *I* say, as what *You* say? If then you attack me merely to divert yourself, your Excuse for writing will be no better than mine. But perhaps you may want Bread; if that be the Case, even go to Dinner, i' God's Name!

If our best Authors, when teiz'd by these Triflers, have not been Masters of this Indifference,

rence, I should not wonder if it were disbeliev'd in me; but when it is consider'd that I have allow'd, my never having been disturb'd into a Reply, has proceeded as much from Vanity as from Philosophy, the Matter then may not seem so incredible: And tho' I confess, the complete Revenge of making them Immortal Dunces in Immortal Verse, might be glorious; yet, if you will call it Insensibility in me, never to have winc'd at them, even that Insensibility has its Happiness, and what could Glory give me more? For my part, I have always had the comfort to think, whenever they design'd me a Disfavour, it generally flew back into their own Faces, as it happens to Children when they squirt at their Play-fellows against the Wind. If a Scribbler cannot be easy, because he fancies I have too good an Opinion of my own Productions, let him write on, and mortify; I owe him not the Charity to be out of Temper myself, merely to keep him quiet, or give him Joy: Nor, in reality, can I see, why any thing misrepresented, tho' believ'd of me by Persons to whom I am unknown, ought to give me any more Concern, than what may be thought of me in *Lapland*: 'Tis with those with whom I am to *live* only, where my Character can affect me; and I will venture to say, he must find out a new way of Writing that will make me pass my Time *there* less agreeably.

You see, Sir, how hard it is for a Man that is talking of himself, to know when to give

over; but if you are tired, lay me aside till you have a fresh Appetite; if not, I'll tell you a Story.

In the Year 1730, there were many Authors, whose Merit wanted nothing but Interest to recommend them to the vacant *Laurel*, and who took it ill, to see it at last conferred upon a Comedian; infomuch, that they were resolved, at least, to shew Specimens of their superior Pretensions, and accordingly enliven'd the publick Papers with ingenious Epigrams, and satyrical Flirts, at the unworthy Successor: These Papers my Friends, with a wicked Smile, would often put into my Hands, and desire me to read them fairly in Company: This was a Challenge which I never declined, and, to do my doughty Antagonists Justice, I always read them with as much impartial Spirit, as if I had writ them myself. While I was thus beset on all Sides, there happen'd to step forth a poetical Knight-Errant to my Assistance, who was hardy enough to publish some compassionate Stanzas in my Favour. These, you may be sure, the Raillery of my Friends could do no less than say, I had written to myself. To deny it, I knew, would but have confirmed their pretended Suspicion: I therefore told them, since it gave them such Joy to believe them my own, I would do my best to make the whole Town think so too. As the Oddness of the Reply was, I knew, what would not be easily comprehended, I desired them to have a Day's Patience, and I would point
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an Explanation to it: To conclude, in two Days after, I sent this Letter, with some doggerel Rhimes at the Bottom,

To the Author of the Whitehall Evening-Post.

S I R,

THE Verses to the Laureat, in yours of Saturday last, have occasion'd the following Reply, which I hope you'll give a Place in your next, to shew that we can be quick, as well as smart, upon a proper Occasion: And, as I think it the lowest Mark of a Scoundrel to make bold with any Man's Character in Print, without subscribing the true Name of the Author; I therefore desire, if the Laureat is concern'd enough to ask the Question, that you will tell him my Name, and where I live; till then, I beg leave to be known by no other than that of,

Your Servant,

Monday, Jan. 11. 1739.

FRANCIS FAIRPLAY.

These were the Verses.

I.

*Ab, bab! Sir Coll, is that thy Way,
Thy own dull Praise to write?
And wou'd'st thou stand so sure a Lay?
No, that's too stale a Bite.*

II.

*Nature, and Art, in thee combine,
Thy Talents here excel:*

All

42 *The LIFE of*
All shining Brags thou dost outshine,
To play the Cheat so well.

III.

Who sees thee in Iago's Part,
But thinks thee such a Rogue?
And is not glad, with all his Heart,
To hang so sad a Dog?

IV.

When Bays thou play'st, Thyself thou art;
For that by Nature fit,
No Blockhead better suits the Part,
Than such a Coxcomb Wit.

V.

In Wronghead too, thy Brains we see,
Who might do well at Plough;
As fit for Parliament was he,
As for the Laurel, Thou.

VI.

Bring thy protected Verse from Court,
And try it on the Stage;
There it will make much better Sport,
And set the Town in Rage.

VII.

There Beaux, and Wits, and Cits, and Smarts,
Where Hissing's not uncivil,
Will shew their Parts to thy Deserts,
And send it to the Devil.

VIII.

*But, ah ! in vain, 'gainst Thee we write,
In vain thy Verse we maul,
Our sharpest Satyr's thy Delight,
* For——Blood ! thou'lt stand it all.*

IX.

*Thunder, 'tis said, the Laurel spares ;
Nought but thy Brows could blast it :
And yet——O curst, provoking Stars !
Thy Comfort is, thou hast it.*

This, Sir, I offer as a Proof, that I was seven Years ago the same cold Candidate for Fame, which I would still be thought ; you will not easily suppose I could have much Concern about it, while, to gratify the merry Pique of my Friends, I was capable of seeming to head the Poetical Cry then against me, and at the same time of never letting the Publick know, 'till this Hour, that these Verses were written by myself : Nor do I give them you as an Entertainment, but merely to shew you this particular Cast of my Temper.

When I have said this, I would not have it thought Affectation in me, when I grant, that no Man worthy the Name of an Author, is a more faulty Writer than myself ; that I am not Master of my own Language, I too often feel, when I am at a loss for Expression : I know too that I have too bold a Disregard for that Correctness, which others set so just a Value upon : This I ought to be ashamed of, when

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* A Line in the Epilogue to the Nonjuror.

I find that Persons, perhaps of colder Imaginations, are allowed to write better than myself. Whenever I speak of any thing that highly delights me, I find it very difficult to keep my Words within the Bounds of Common Sense: Even when I write too, the same Failing will sometimes get the better of me; of which I cannot give you a stronger Instance, than in that wild Expression I made use of in the first Edition of my Preface to the *Provok'd Husband*; where, speaking of Mrs. Oldfield's excellent Performance in the Part of Lady *Townly*, my Words ran thus, *viz. It is not enough to say, that here she outdid her usual Outdoing.*—A most vile Jingle, I grant it! You may well ask me, How could I possibly commit such a Wantonness to Paper? And I owe myself the Shame of confessing, I have no Excuse for it, but that, like a Lover in the Fulness of his Content, by endeavouring to be floridly grateful, I talk'd Nonsense. Not but it makes me smile to remember how many flat Writers have made themselves brisk upon this single Expression; wherever the Verb, *Outdo*, could come in, the pleasant Accusative, *Outdoing*, was sure to follow it. The provident Wags knew, that *Decies repetita placent*: so delicious a Morfel could not be serv'd up too often! After it had held them nine times told for a Jest, the Publick has been pester'd with a tenth Skull, thick enough to repeat it. Nay, the very learned in the Law, have at last facetiously laid hold of it! Ten

Years

Years after it first came from me, it served to enliven the Eloquence of an eloquent Pleader before a House of Parliament! What Author would not envy me so frolicksome a Fault, that had such publick Honours paid to it?

After this Consciousness of my real Defects, you will easily judge, Sir, how little I presume that my Poetical Labours may outlive those of my mortal *Cotemporaries*.

At the same time that I am so humble in my Pretensions to Fame, I would not be thought to undervalue it; Nature will not suffer us to despise it, but she may sometimes make us too fond of it. I have known more than one good Writer, very near ridiculous, from being in too much Heat about it. Whoever intrinsically deserves it, will always have a proportionable Right to it. It can neither be resign'd, nor taken from you by Violence. Truth, which is unalterable, must (however his Fame may be contested) give every Man his Due: What a Poem weighs, it will be worth; nor is it in the Power of Human Eloquence, with Favour or Prejudice, to increase or diminish its Value. Prejudice, 'tis true, may a while discolour it; but it will always have its Appeal to the Equity of good Sense, which will never fail, in the End, to reverse all false Judgment against it. Therefore when I see an eminent Author hurt, and impatient at an impotent Attack upon his Labours, he disturbs my Inclination to admire him; I grow doubtful

doubtful of the favourable Judgment I have made of him, and am quite uneasy to see him so tender, in a Point he cannot but know he ought not himself to be Judge of; his Concern indeed, at another's Prejudice, or Disapprobation, may be natural; but, to own it, seems to me a natural Weakness. When a Work is apparently great, it will go without Crutches; all your Art and Anxiety to heighten the Fame of it, then becomes low and little. He that will bear no Censure, must be often robb'd of his due Praise. Fools have as good a Right to be Readers, as Men of Sense have, and why not to give their Judgments too? Methinks it would be a sort of Tyranny in Wit, for an Author to be publicly putting every Argument to Death that appear'd against him; so absolute a Demand for Approbation, puts us upon our Right to dispute it; Praise is as much the Reader's Property, as Wit is the Author's; Applause is not a Tax paid to him as a Prince, but rather a Benevolence given to him as a Beggar; and we have naturally more Charity for the dumb Beggar, than the sturdy one. The Merit of a Writer, and a fine Woman's Face, are never mended by their talking of them: How amiable is she that seems not to know she is handsome!

To conclude; all I have said upon this Subject is much better contained in six Lines of a Reverend Author, which will be an Answer to all critical Censure for ever.

Time

*Time is the Judge; Time has nor Friend, nor Foe;
False Fame will wither, and the True will grow:
Arm'd with this Truth, all Criticks I defy,
For, if I fall, by my own Pen I die.
While Snarlers strive with proud but fruitless Pain,
To wound Immortals, or to slay the Slain.*



CHAP. III.

The Author's several Chances for the Church, the Court, and the Army. Going to the University. Met the Revolution at Nottingham. Took Arms on that Side. What he saw of it. A few Political Thoughts. Fortune willing to do for him. His Neglect of her. The Stage prefer'd to all her Favours. The Profession of an Actor consider'd. The Misfortunes and Advantages of it.

I AM now come to that Crisis of my Life, when Fortune seem'd to be at a Loss what she should do with me. Had she favour'd my Father's first Designation of me, he might then, perhaps, have had as sanguine Hopes of my being a Bishop, as I afterwards conceived of my being a General, when I first took Arms, at the Revolution. Nay, after that, I had a third Chance too, equally as good, of becoming an Under-propper of the State. How, at last, I came to be none of all these, the Sequel will inform you.

About

About the Year 1687, I was taken from School to stand at the Election of Children into *Winckles* College; my being, by my Mother's Side, a Descendant of *William of Wickham*, the Founder, my Father (who knew little how the World was to be dealt with) imagined my having that Advantage, would be Security enough for my Success, and so sent me simply down thither, without the least favourable Recommendation or Interest, but that of my naked Merit, and a pompous Pedigree in my Pocket. Had he tack'd a Direction to my Back, and sent me by the Carrier to the Mayor of the Town, to be chosen Member of Parliament there, I might have had just as much Chance to have succeeded in the one, as the other. But I must not omit in this Place, to let you know, that the Experience which my Father then bought, at my Cost, taught him, some Years after, to take a more judicious Care of my younger Brother, *Lewis Cibber*, whom, with the Present of a Statue of the Founder, of his own making, he recommended to the same College. This Statue now stands (I think) over the School-Door there, and was so well executed, that it seem'd to speak—for its Kinsman. It was no sooner set up, than the Door of Preferment was open to him.

Here, one would think, my Brother had the Advantage of me, in the Favour of Fortune, by this his first laudable Step into the World. I own, I was so proud of his Success, that I even valued myself upon it; and yet it

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J. Kneller del. & sculp. Amst.

From a Picture at Winchester College

Impensis J. & P. Knapton Londini 1738.



Henry Bishop of London

I Riley pinx:

Sold by L. Smith att the Golden Lyon in Russel Street Covent Garden

I Beckett fecit

is but a melancholy Reflection to observe, how unequally his Profession and mine were provided for; when I, who had been the Outcast of Fortune, could find means, from my Income of the Theatre, before I was my own Master there, to supply, in his highest Preferment, his common Necessities. I cannot part with his Memory without telling you, I had as sincere a Concern for this Brother's Well-being, as my own. He had lively Parts, and more than ordinary Learning, with a good deal of natural Wit and Humour; but from too great a Disregard to his Health, he died a Fellow of *New College* in *Oxford*, soon after he had been ordained by Dr. *Compton*, then Bishop of *London*. I now return to the State of my own Affair at *Winchester*.

After the Election, the Moment I was inform'd that I was one of the unsuccessful Candidates, I blest myself to think what a happy Reprieve I had got, from the confin'd Life of a School-boy! and the same Day took Post back to *London*, that I might arrive time enough to see a Play (then my darling Delight) before my Mother might demand an Account of my travelling Charges. When I look back to that Time, it almost makes me tremble to think what Miseries, in fifty Years farther in Life, such an unthinking Head was liable to! To ask, why Providence afterwards took more Care of me, than I did of myself, might be making too bold an Enquiry into its secret Will and Pleasure: All I can say to

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Henry Bishop of London

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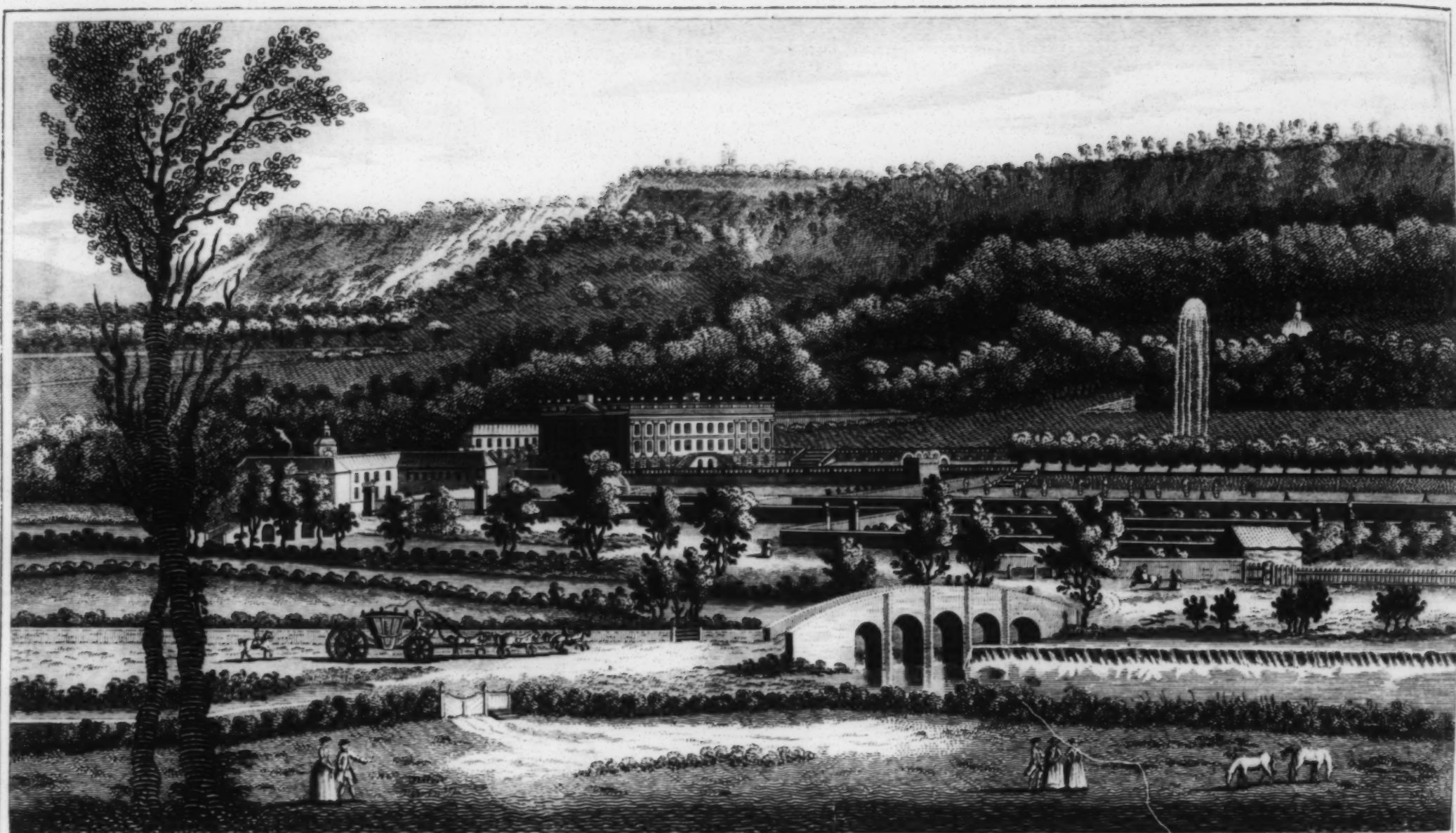
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that

that Point, is, that I am thankful, and amaz'd at it!

'Twas about this time I first imbib'd an Inclination, which I durst not reveal, for the Stage; for, besides that I knew it would disoblige my Father, I had no Conception of any means, practicable, to make my way to it. I therefore suppress'd the bewitching Ideas of so sublime a Station, and compounded with my Ambition by laying a lower Scheme, of only getting the nearest way into the immediate Life of a Gentleman Collegiate. My Father being at this time employed at *Chatsworth* in *Derbyshire*, by the (then) Earl of *Devonshire*, who was raising that Seat from a *Gotlick*, to a *Grecian* Magnificence, I made use of the Leisure I then had, in *London*, to open to him, by Letter, my Disinclination to wait another Year for an uncertain Preferment at *Winchester*, and to entreat him that he would send me, *per saltum*, by a shorter Cut, to the University. My Father, who was naturally indulgent to me, seem'd to comply with my Request, and wrote word, that as soon as his Affairs would permit, he would carry me with him, and settle me in some College, but rather at *Cambridge*, where, (during his late Residence at that Place, in making some Statues that now stand upon *Trinity* College New Library, he had contracted some Acquaintance with the Heads of Houses, who might assist his Intentions for me. This I lik'd better than to go discountenanc'd to *Oxford*, to which it would





View of Chatsworth House, in the County of Derby. The Seat of his Grace the Duke of Devonshire.



His Royal highness The Prince of Orange

J. Beckett sculpsit



NOTTINGHAM called by the Saxons *Nottingham* signifying a woody Forrest, or a Dwelling in Caves) is pleasantly it afterwards fell into their hands, to besiege whom *Ethelred*, King of the West-Saxons and his brother *Alfred* in 868 joined with the Conqueror fortified it with a Castle out of the Ruins of the old one, and gave it with other Lordships to *William Ferrers*, *Mowbray* who were also Dukes of *Sorfolk*, then *Richard* Duke of *York* (by marrying a Daughter of the last) who on his lastly King *Charles II.* honoured here with *Henry* Lord *Finch*, in which Noble Family the Title still remains. *Edward* the King set up his Standard here, but it became afterwards a garrison for the Parliament. From the Rutland he was taken Prisoner whilst intriguing with *Queen Isabel*. This Town was incorporated long before King *Henry* a Common-Council King *Edward* I. empower'd them to choose a Mayor annually. In 27th of *Henry VI.* it was made a *Woolen* of silk & *Woolen* stockings is here a very considerable branch of Trade & by the Convenience of *St. Rivers* Trent & Neighbour

Sam^l and Nath^l Buck delin. et sculp. P^o

SOUTH PROSPECT OF NOTTINGHAM



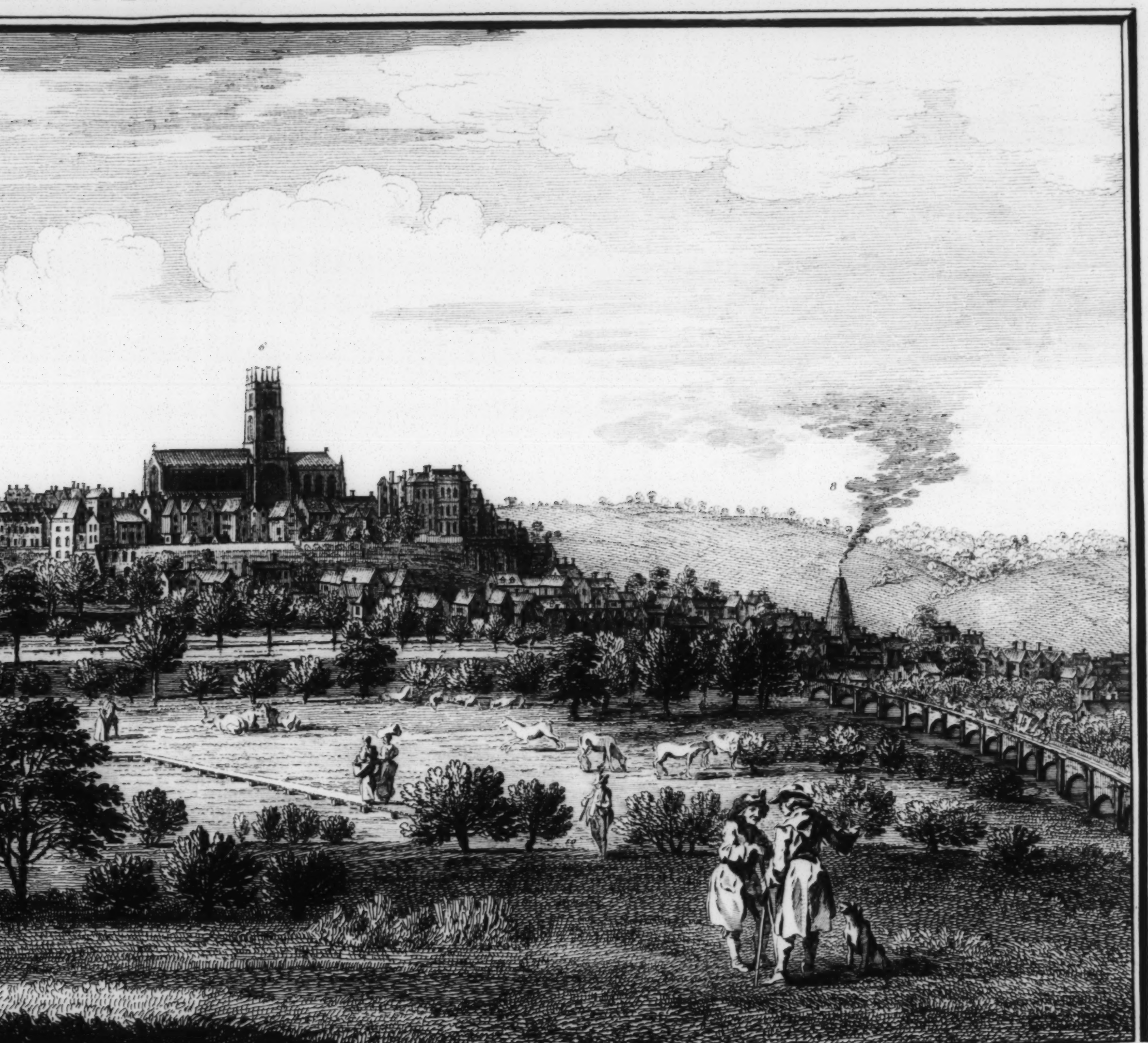
is pleasantly situated & almost surrounded with Hills; only open to the South. It lies near the conflux of the River Trent, and boasts even to have been built in the time of the old British Kings. In 868 joined with Burthred King of Mercia; but the Danes retiring into the Castle, and there depending themselves obliged the besiegers to make Peace. King Edw. about 1068 encompass'd the Town with William Peverel his natural Son, with the title of Earl of Nottingham. In succeeding Ages were honour'd with this title, 1st Robert de Ferrars by marriage in to the forsaide Family; the next 2^d John who on his Accession to the Crown bestow'd it on William Lord Berkley a Descendant of the Mowbray Family; who dying without Issue King Henry VIII. conferr'd it on Henry Fitzroy his natural Son. The Castle was repaired by King Edward IV. and King Richard III. whose situation on a steep Rock and strength of its Fortifications, render'd it impregnable by Sea or Land. The Castle was given before the Civil Wars to the Duke of Buckingham; He sold it to the Marq^s of Newcastle, who erected this state Prison. King Henry II. gave it a Charter, for in Edward the Confessor's time it had 173 Burgesses. Many of our Kings have in this town kept their Court, and assembled here several Parliaments. Neighbouring Counties are from hence furnish'd with all sorts of Merchandize. Here are 3 Parish Churches, 3 Hospitals, 12 Inns, Houses & a Free School. It hath 4 good Fairs & the principal Market Days are Wednesdays, Saturdays & Mondays. Published according to Act of Parliament, March 25th 1743. Garden Court 16th 1 Middle Temple London.

E SOUTH PROSPECT OF NOTTIN



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 sh delin. et sculp. Published according to Act of Parliament March 25th 1743. Garden Court 16th 1 Middle Temple London.

INGHAM.



one of the old British Kings. Here the English sheltered themselves from the Fury of the Danes, but
 (Anglo) encompass'd the Town with all that whereof some part on the West side still remains. Will^m
 ferriard Family; the next was John afterwards King of England; then six of the Family of
 conferr'd it on Henry Fitzroy his natural Son. Queen Elizabeth on Charles Howard of Effingham;
 and it impregnable by Storm; tho' in the Barons Wars it was taken by surprize. In the Civil
 castle who erected this stately Fabrick. Here is shewn a Cavern call'd Mortimers-Hole where
 assembled here several Parliaments. It was anciently governed by two Bayliffs, Coroner and
 of peace. There are besides 2 Coroners, 2 Chamberlains, and a common Council of 24. The Frame-Work
 Friars & the principal Market on Saturday. The present Memb^{rs} of Parliam^t are Berke Warren & Fulhambridge.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. The Castle. | 6. St. Mary's Church. |
| 2. The way leading to the
Castle. | 7. River Lin. |
| 3. St. Nicholas's Church. | 8. Glass House. |
| 4. St. Peter's Church. | 9. The London Road. |
| 5. The Market House. | 10. The foot walk thro' the
beautiful Meadows. |



would have been a sort of Reproach to me, not to have come elected. After some Months were elaps'd, my Father, not being willing to let me lie too long idling in *London*, sent for me down to *Chattsworth*, to be under his Eye, till he cou'd be at leisure to carry me to *Cambridge*. Before I could set out, on my Journey thither, the Nation fell in labour of the Revolution, the News being then just brought to *London*, That the Prince of *Orange*, at the Head of an Army was landed in the *West*. When I came to *Nottingham*, I found my Father in Arms there, among those Forces which the Earl of *Devonshire* had rais'd for the Redress of our violated Laws and Liberties. My Father judg'd this a proper Season, for a young Stripling to turn himself loose into the Bustle of the World; and being himself too advanc'd in Years, to endure the Winter Fatigue, which might possibly follow, entreated that noble Lord, that he would be pleas'd to accept of his Son in his Room, and that he would give him (my Father) leave to return, and finish his Works at *Chattsworth*. This was so well receiv'd by his Lordship, that he not only admitted of my Service, but promis'd my Father, in return, that when Affairs were settled, he would provide for me. Upon this, my Father return'd to *Derbyshire*, while I, not a little transported, jump'd into his Saddle. Thus, in one Day, all my Thoughts of the University were smother'd in Ambition! A slight Commission for a Horse Officer, was

the least View I had before me. At this Crisis you cannot but observe, that the Fate of King *James*, and of the Prince of *Orange*, and that of so minute a Being as my self, were all at once upon the Anvil: In what shape they wou'd severally come out, tho' a good *Guess* might be made, was not then *demonstrable* to the deepest Foresight; but as my Fortune seem'd to be of small Importance to the Publick, Providence thought fit to postpone it, 'till that of those great Rulers of Nations, was justly perfected. Yet, had my Father's Business permitted him to have carried me, one Month sooner (as he intended) to the University, who knows but, by this time, that purer Fountain might have wash'd my Imperfections into a Capacity of writing (instead of Plays and Annual Odes) Sermons, and Pastoral Letters. But whatever Care of the Church might, so, have fallen to my Share, as I dare say it may be now, in better Hands, I ought not to repine at my being otherwise dispos'd of.

You must, now, consider me as one among those desperate Thousands, who, after a Patience sorely try'd, took Arms under the Banner of Necessity, the natural Parent of all Human Laws, and Government. I question, if in all the Histories of Empire, there is one Instance of so bloodless a Revolution, as that in *England* in 1688, wherein Whigs, Tories, Princes, Prelates, Nobles, Clergy, common People, and a Standing Army, were unanimous. To have seen all *England* of one Mind.



*Jacobus Secundus Dei Gratia. Angliæ, Scotiæ,
Franciæ, et Hiberniæ Rex. &c.*

G. Kneller Pinxit

J. Smith fecit

Sold by J. Smith at the Lyon and Crown in Russel Street Covent-Garden

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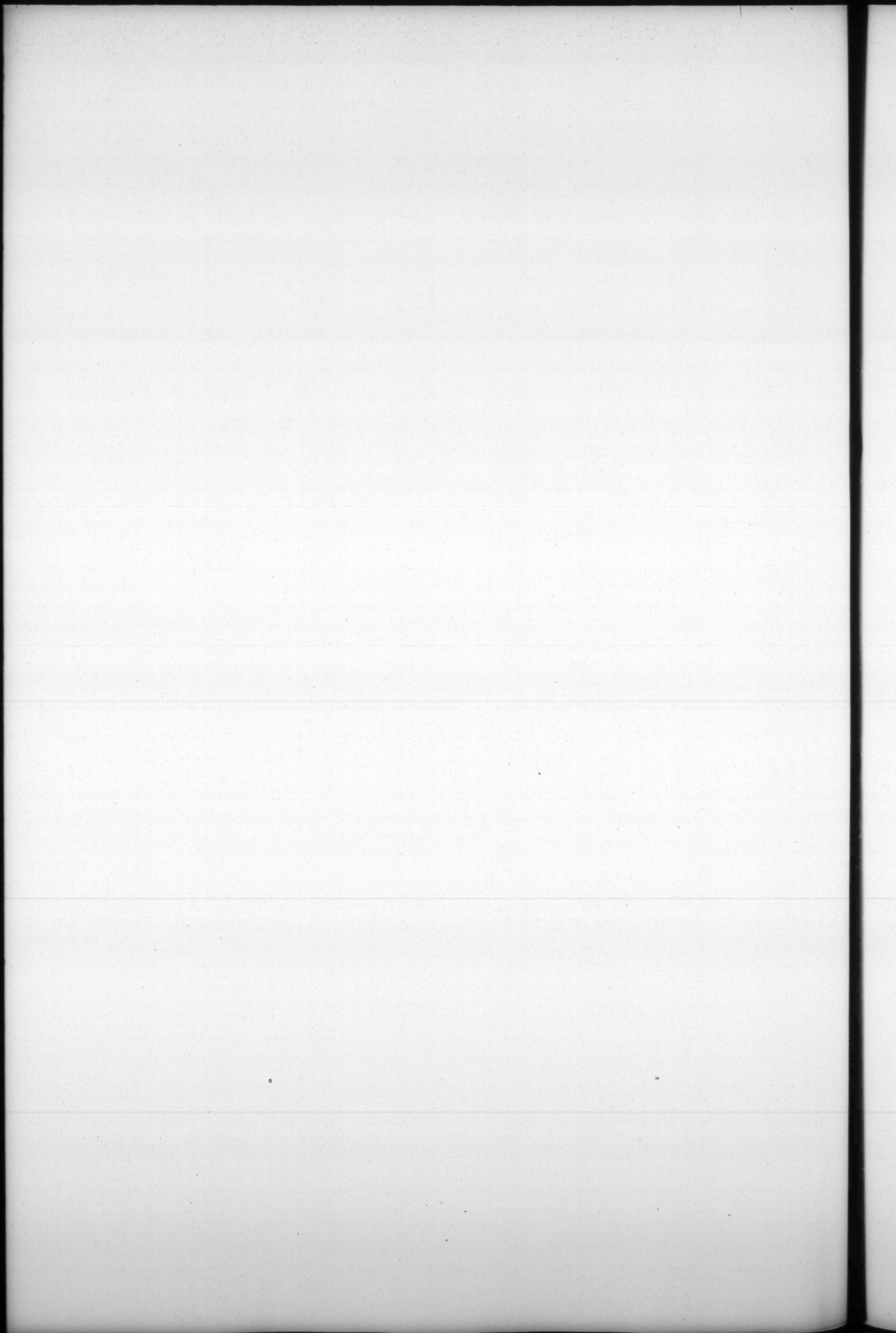


*Jacobus Secundus Dei Gratia. Angliæ, Scotiæ,
Franciæ, et Hiberniæ Rex. &.^{ct}*

G. Kneller Pinxit

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Sold by I. Smith at the Lyon and Crown in Russel street Covent-Garden



is to have liv'd at a very particular Juncture. Happy Nation! who are never divided among themselves, but when they have least to complain of! Our greatest Grievance since that Time, seems to have been, that we cannot all govern; and 'till the Number of good Places are equal to those, who think themselves qualified for them, there must ever be a Cause of Contention among us. While Great Men want great Posts, the Nation will never want real or seeming Patriots; and while great Posts are fill'd with Persons, whose Capacities are but Human, such Persons will never be allow'd to be without Errors; not even the Revolution, with all its Advantages, it seems, has been able to furnish us with unexceptionable Statesmen! for, from that time, I don't remember any one Set of Ministers, that have not been heartily rail'd at; a Period long enough, one would think (if all of them have been as bad as they have been call'd) to make a People despair of ever seeing a good one: But as it is possible that Envy, Prejudice, or Party, may sometimes have a share in what is generally thrown upon 'em, it is not easy for a private Man, to know who is absolutely in the right, from what is said against them, or from what their Friends or Dependants may say in their Favour: Tho' I can hardly forbear thinking, that they who have been *longest* rail'd at, must, from that Circumstance, shew, in some sort, a Proof of Capacity.——But to my History.

It were almost incredible to tell you, at the latter End of King *James's* Time (though the Rod of Arbitrary Power was always shaking over us) with what Freedom and Contempt the common People, in the open Streets, talk'd of his wild Measures to make a whole Protestant Nation Papists; and yet, in the Height of our secure and wanton Defiance of him, we, of the Vulgar, had no farther Notion of any Remedy for this Evil, than a satisfy'd Presumption, that our Numbers were too great to be master'd by his mere Will and Pleasure; that though he might be too hard for our Laws, he would never be able to get the better of our Nature; and, that to drive all *England* into Popery and Slavery, he would find, would be teaching an old Lion to dance.

But, happy was it for the Nation, that it had then wiser Heads in it, who knew how to lead a People so dispos'd into Measures for the Publick Preservation.

Here, I cannot help reflecting on the very different Deliverances *England* met with, at this Time, and in the very same Year of the Century before: Then (in 1588) under a glorious Princess, who had, at heart, the Good and Happiness of her People, we scatter'd and destroy'd the most formidable Navy of Invaders, that ever cover'd the Seas: And now (in 1688) under a Prince, who had alienated the Hearts of his People, by his absolute Measures, to oppress them, a foreign Power is receiv'd with open Arms, in Defence of our Laws, Liberties,



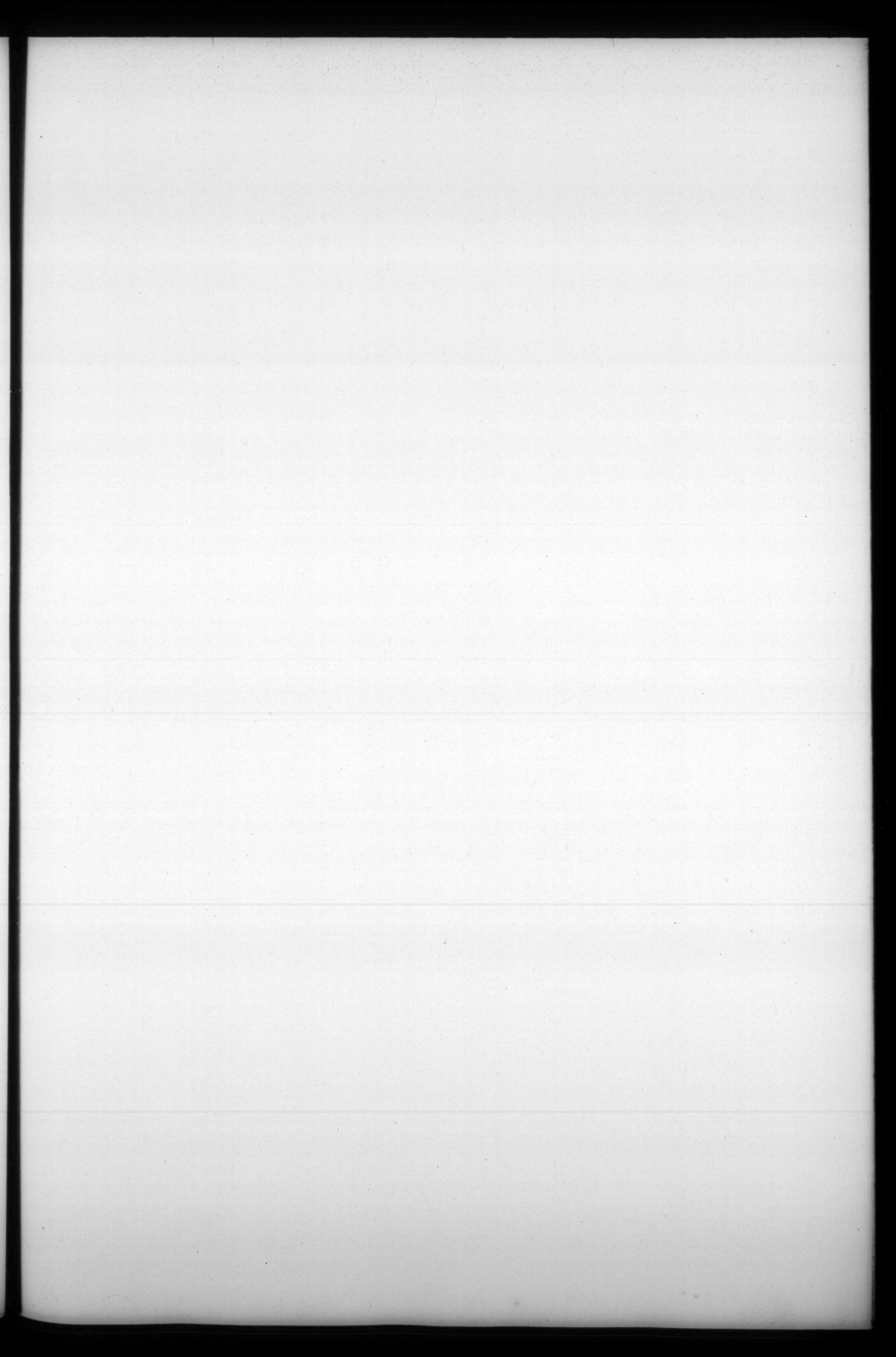


berties, and Religion, which our native Prince had invaded! How widely different were these two Monarchs in their Sentiments of Glory! But, *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.*

When we consider, in what height of the Nation's Prosperity, the Successor of Queen *Elizabeth* came to this Throne, it seems amazing, that such a Pile of *English* Fame, and Glory, which her skilful Administration had erected, should, in every following Reign, down to the Revolution, so unhappily moulder away, in one continual Gradation of Political Errors: All which must have been avoided, if the plain Rule, which that wise Princess left behind her, had been observed, *viz. That the Love of her People was the surest Support of her Throne.* This was the Principle by which she so happily govern'd herself, and those she had the Care of. In this she found Strength to combat, and struggle thro' more Difficulties, and dangerous Conspiracies, than ever *English* Monarch had to cope with. At the same time that she profess'd to *desire* the People's Love, she took care that her Actions shou'd *deserve* it, without the least Abatement of her Prerogative; the Terror of which she so artfully covered, that she sometimes seem'd to flatter those she was determin'd should obey. If the four following Princes had exercis'd their Regal Authority with so visible a Regard to the Publick Welfare, it were hard to know, whether the People of

England might have ever complain'd of them, or even felt the want of that Liberty they now so happily enjoy. 'Tis true that before her Time, our Ancestors had many successful Contests with their Sovereigns for their *ancient Right* and *Claim* to it; yet what did those Successes amount to? little more than a Declaration, that there was such a Right in being; but who ever saw it enjoy'd? Did not the Actions of almost every succeeding Reign shew, there were still so many Doors of Oppression left open to the Prerogative, that (whatever Value our most eloquent Legislators may have set upon those ancient Liberties) I doubt it will be difficult to fix the Period of their having a real Being, before the Revolution: Or, if there ever was an elder Period of our unmolested enjoying them, I own, my poor Judgment is at a loss where to place it. I will boldly say then, it is, to the Revolution only, we owe the full Possession of what, 'till then, we never had more than a perpetually contested Right to: And, from thence, from the Revolution it is, that the Protestant Successors of King *William* have found their Paternal Care and Maintenance of that Right, has been the surest Basis of their Glory.

These, Sir, are a few of my Political Notions, which I have ventur'd to expose, that you may see what sort of an *English* Subject I am; how wise, or weak they may have shewn me, is not my Concern; let the Weight of these Matters have drawn me never so far
out





*His Royal Highness George Prince of Denmark
Lord High Admiral of England, General of Her Majesties Forces & Lord
Warden of the Cinque Ports &c.*

Kneller sculp. Imp. et Angl. Eques Aur. p. m. 1704.

J. Smith fecit.

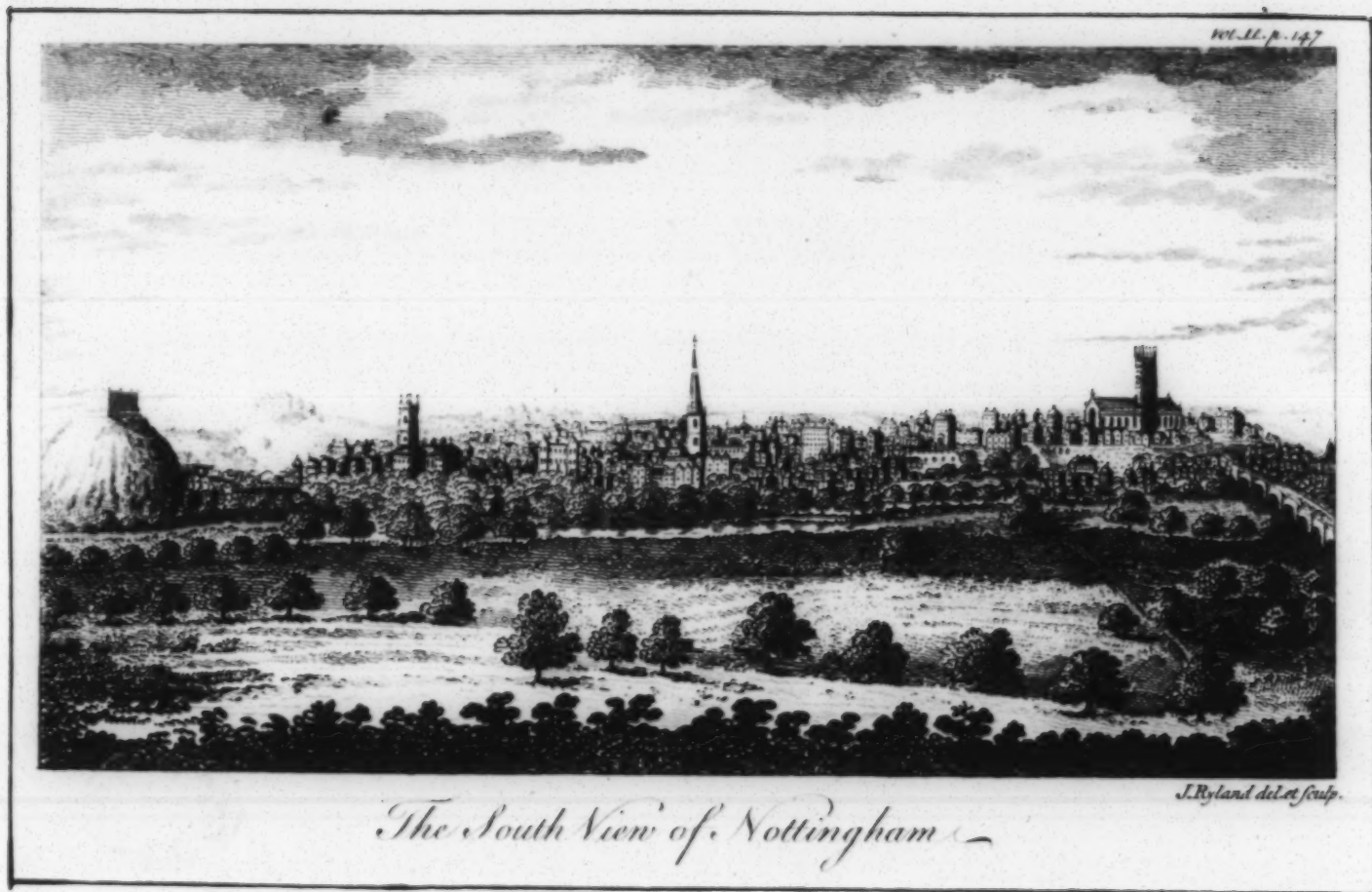
Sold by J. Smith at the Lyon and Crown in Russel Street Covent-Garden.



Her Highness Princess Anne.

A. Kneller Baronet pinx.

Sold by J. Smith at y^e Lyon & Crown in Russell-Street Covent-Garden.



out of my Depth, I still flatter myself, that I have kept a simple, honest Head above Water. And it is a solid Comfort to me, to consider that how insignificant soever my Life was at the Revolution, it had still the good Fortune to make one, among the many, who brought it about; and that I, now, with my Coævals, as well as with the Millions, since born, enjoy the happy Effects of it.

But I must now let you see how my particular Fortune went forward, with this Change in the Government; of which I shall not pretend to give you any farther Account than what my simple Eyes saw of it.

We had not been many Days at *Nottingham* before we heard, that the Prince of *Denmark*, with some other great Persons, were gone off, from the King, to the Prince of *Orange*, and that the Princess *Anne*, fearing the King her Father's Resentment might fall upon her, for her Consort's Revolt, had withdrawn herself, in the Night, from *London*, and was then within half a Day's Journey of *Nottingham*; on which very Morning we were suddenly alarmed with the News, that two thousand of the King's Dragoons were in close Pursuit to bring her back Prisoner to *London*: But this Alarm it seems was all Stratagem, and was but a part of that general Terror which was thrown into many other Places about the Kingdom, at the same time, with design to animate and unite the People in their common Defence; it being then given out, that the

Irish

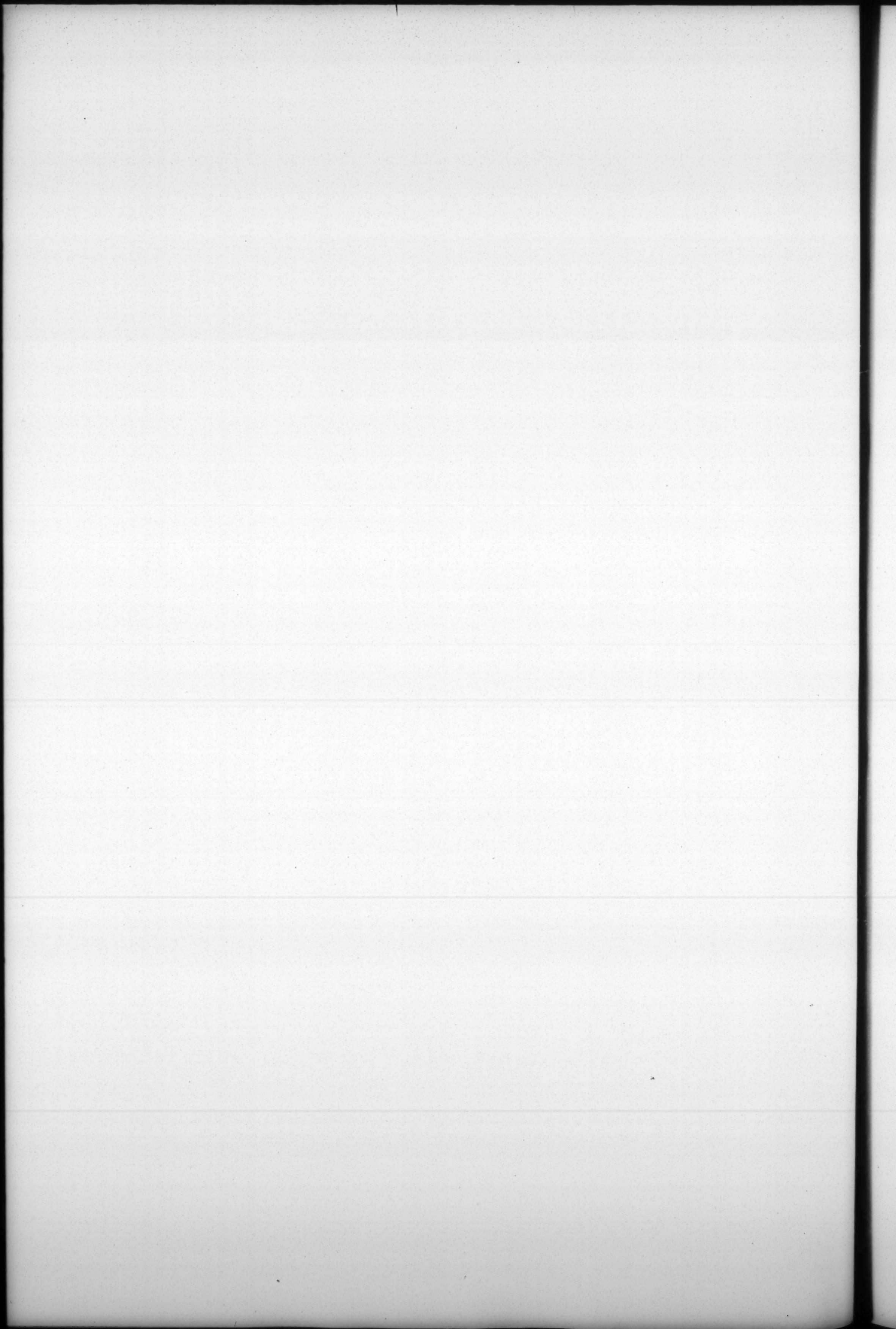
Irish were every where at our Heels, to cut off all the Protestants within the Reach of their Fury. In this Alarm our Troops scrambled to Arms in as much Order as their Consternation would admit of, when having advanced some few Miles on the *London Road*, they met the Princess in a Coach, attended only by the Lady *Churchill*, (now Duchess Dowager of *Marlborough*) and the Lady *Fitzbarding*, whom they conducted into *Nottingham*, through the Acclamations of the People: The same Night all the Noblemen, and the other Persons of Distinction, then in Arms, had the Honour to sup at her Royal Highness's Table; which was then furnished (as all her necessary Accommodations were) by the Care, and at the Charge of the Lord *Devonshire*. At this Entertainment, of which I was a Spectator, something very particular surpriz'd me: The noble Guests at the Table happening to be more in Number, than Attendants out of Liveries, could be found for, I being well known in the Lord *Devonshire's* Family, was desired by his Lordship's *Maitre d'Hotel* to assist at it: The Post assigned me was to observe what the Lady *Churchill* might call for. Being so near the Table, you may naturally ask me, what I might have heard to have passed in Conversation at it? which I should certainly tell you, had I attended to above two Words that were uttered there, and those were, *Some Wine and Water*. These, I remember, came distinguished, and observ'd to my Ear, because they came from



Her Grace y^e Dutchess of Marlborough

& Kneller Eques pinx.

Sold by I. Smith at y^e Lyon & Crown in Russell street Covent Garden.



the fair Guest, whom I took such Pleasure to wait on: Except at that single Sound, all my Senses were collected into my Eyes, which during the whole Entertainment wanted no better Amusement, than of stealing now and then the Delight of gazing on the fair Object so near me: If so clear an Emanation of Beauty, such a commanding Grace of Aspect struck me into a Regard that had something softer than the most profound Respect in it, I cannot see why I may not, without Offence, remember it; since Beauty, like the Sun, must sometimes lose its Power to chuse, and shine into equal Warmth, the Peasant and the Courtier. Now to give you, Sir, a farther Proof of how good a Taste my first hopeful Entrance into Manhood set out with, I remember above twenty Years after, when the same Lady had given the World four of the loveliest Daughters, that ever were gaz'd on, even after they were all nobly married, and were become the reigning Toasts of every Party of Pleasure, their still lovely Mother had at the same time her Votaries, and her Health very often took the Lead, in those involuntary Triumphs of Beauty. However presumptuous, or impertinent these Thoughts might have appear'd at my first entertaining them, why may I not hope that my having kept them decently secret, for full fifty Years, may be now a good round Plea for their Pardon? Were I now qualified to say more of this celebrated Lady, I should conclude it thus: That she
has

has liv'd (to all Appearance) a peculiar Favourite of Providence; that few Examples can parallel the Profusion of Blessings which have attended so long a Life of Felicity. A Person so attractive! a Husband so memorably great! an Offspring so beautiful! a Fortune so immense! and a Title, which (when Royal Favour had no higher to bestow) she only could receive from the Author of Nature; a great Grandmother without grey Hairs! These are such consummate Indulgencies, that we might think Heaven has center'd them all in one Person, to let us see how far, with a lively Understanding, the full Possession of them could contribute to human Happiness.—I now return to our Military Affairs.

From *Nottingham* our Troops march'd to *Oxford*; through every Town we pass'd, the People came out, in some sort of Order, with such rural, and rusty Weapons as they had, to meet us, in Acclamations of Welcome, and good Wishes. This, I thought, promis'd a favourable End of our Civil War, when the Nation seem'd so willing to be all of a Side! At *Oxford* the Prince and Princess of *Denmark* met for the first time, after their late Separation, and had all possible Honours paid them by the University. Here we rested in quiet Quarters for several Weeks, till the Flight of King *James* into *France*; when the Nation being left to take care of itself, the only Security that could be found for it, was to advance the Prince and Princess of *Orange* to the vacant

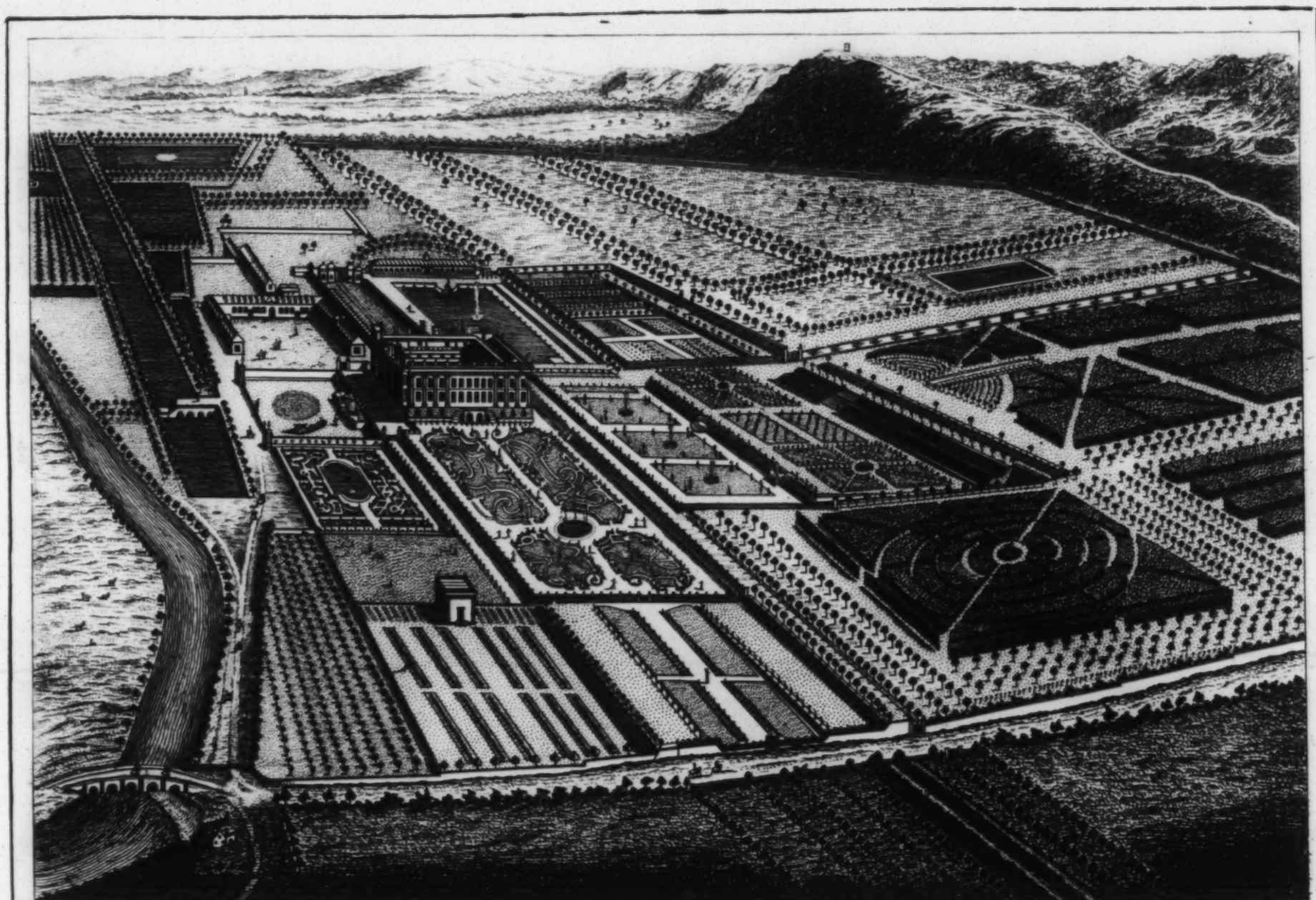
cant



H. Hysing ad vivum pinx

Her Highness Ann Princess of Orange.

*Done from the Painting wth Her Roy^l High^{ness} Presented to the late Countess of Sussex & now Inscr^{ib}d to the
Right Hon^{ble} Earl of Sussex Knight of y^e most Hon^{ble} Order of the Bath by his most obedient Serv^t John F.*



Chatsworth in Derbyshire is a Seat of the Duke of Devonshire. This Magnificent ^{Palace} for any Prince in Europe to dwell in, is raised in the most barren part in the middle of inaccessible Mountains it shews how Art can come up to Nature and express the Gusto Grande as much as any building in the world. Opulency and Judgment blended together are conspicuous in every part of this celebrated Pile, its outward Structure, Entrance, Squares, Galleries &c. the Chambers and their Furniture &c. the curiosities of the Gardens: its Statues, Ponds, Cascades, surprising contrivances of Fountains, Cataracts &c. are all beyond expression. Its impossible to view the beauties of this noble place without being lost in admiration.

cant Throne. The public Tranquillity being now settled, our Forces were remanded back to *Nottingham*. Here all our Officers, who had commanded them from their first Rising, received Commissions to confirm them in their several Posts; and at the same time, such private Men as chose to return to their proper Business or Habitations, were offer'd their Discharges. Among the small Number of those, who receiv'd them, I was one; for not hearing that my Name was in any of these new Commissions, I thought it time for me to take my leave of Ambition, as Ambition had before seduc'd me from the imaginary Honours of the Gown, and therefore resolv'd to hunt my Fortune in some other Field.

From *Nottingham* I again return'd to my Father at *Chatsworth*, where I staid till my Lord came down, with the new Honours of Lord Steward of his Majesty's Household, and Knight of the Garter! a noble Turn of Fortune! and a deep Stake he had play'd for! which calls to my Memory a Story we had then in the Family, which though too light for our graver Historians Notice, may be of weight enough for my humble Memoirs. This noble Lord being in the Presence-Chamber, in King *James's* Time, and known to be no Friend to the Measures of his Administration; a certain Person in favour there, and desirous to be more so, took occasion to tread rudely upon his Lordship's Foot, which was return'd with a sudden Blow upon the Spot: For
this

this Misdemeanour his Lordship was fin'd thirty thousand Pounds; but I think had some Time allowed him for the Payment. In the Summer preceding the Revolution, when his Lordship retired to *Chattsworth*, and had been there deeply engaged with other Noblemen, in the Measures, which soon after brought it to bear, King *James* sent a Person down to him, with Offers to mitigate his Fine, upon Conditions of ready Payment, to which his Lordship reply'd, That if his Majesty pleas'd to allow him a little longer Time, he would rather chuse to play *double* or *quit* with him: The Time of the intended rising being then so near at hand, the Demand, it seems, came too late for a more serious Answer.

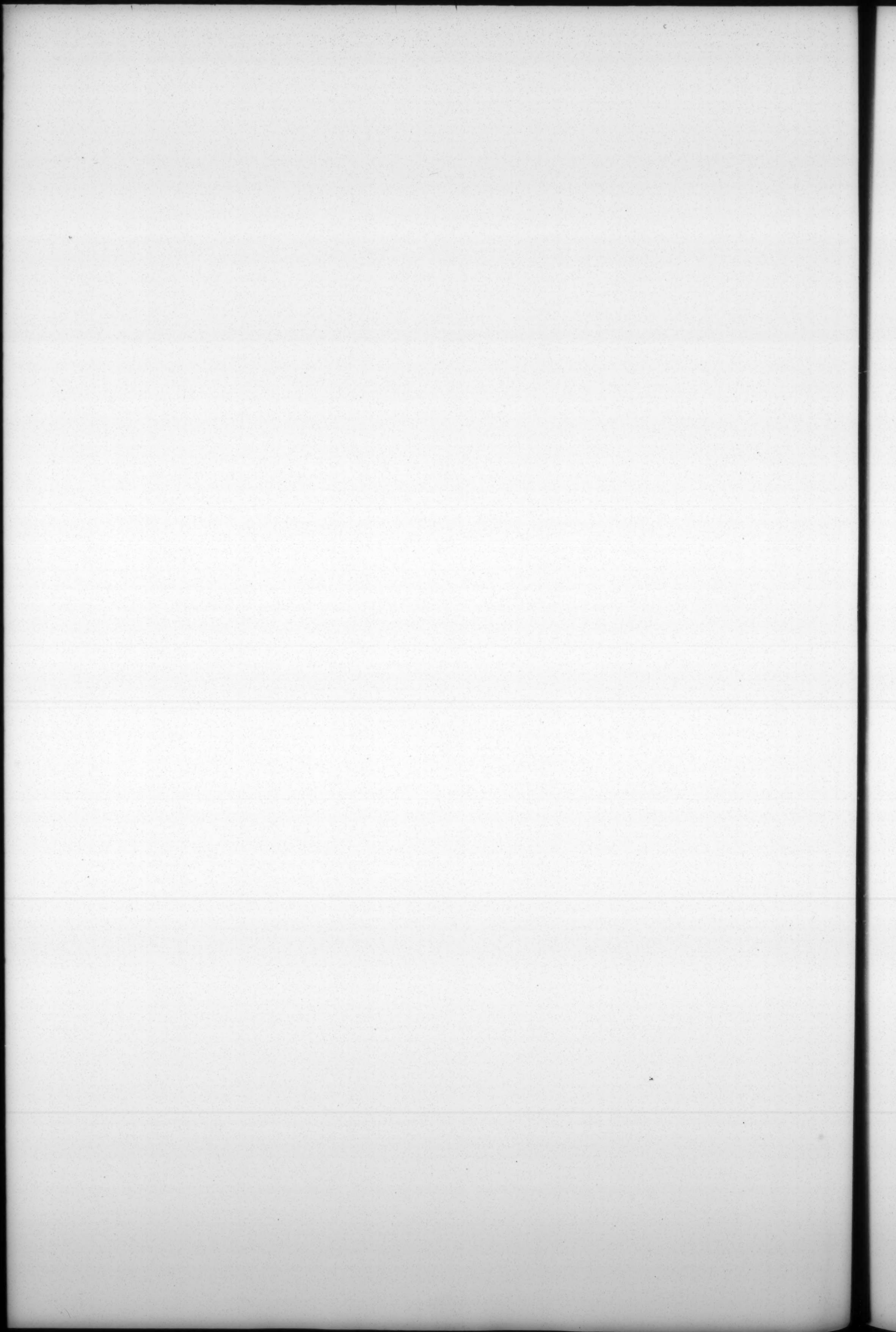
However low my Pretensions to Preferment were at this Time, my Father thought that a little Court-Favour added to them, might give him a Chance for saving the Expence of maintaining me, as he had intended at the University: He therefore order'd me to draw up a Petition to the Duke, and to give it some Air of Merit, to put it into *Latin*, the Prayer of which was, That his Grace would be pleas'd to do something (I really forget what) for me. ——— However, the Duke upon receiving it, was so good as to desire my Father would send me to *London* in the Winter, where he would consider of some Provision for me. It might, indeed, well require Time to consider it; for I believe it was then harder to know what I was really fit for, than to have got me any thing



JAKOBUS II.D.G.
ANGLIÆ, SCOTIÆ, FRANCIA
ET HIBERNIÆ REX.

Phil. a Gunst Sculpsit.

A. Marrebeck excudit.



thing I was not fit for: However, to *London* I came, where I enter'd into my first State of Attendance and Dependance for about five Months, till the *February* following. But, alas! in my Intervals of Leisure, by frequently seeing Plays, my wise Head was turn'd to higher Views, I saw no joy in any other Life than that of an Actor, so that (as before, when a Candidate at *Winchester*) I was even afraid of succeeding to the Preferment I sought for: 'Twas on the Stage alone I had form'd a Happiness preferable to all that Camps or Courts could offer me! and there was I determin'd, let Father and Mother take it as they pleas'd, to fix my *non ultra*. Here I think myself oblig'd, in respect to the Honour of that noble Lord, to acknowledge, that I believe his real Intentions to do well for me, were prevented by my own inconsiderate Folly; so that if my Life did not then take a more laudable Turn, I have no one but myself to reproach for it; for I was credibly informed by the Gentlemen of his Household, that his Grace had, in their Hearing, talk'd of recommending me to the Lord *Shrewsbury*, then Secretary of State, for the first proper Vacancy in that Office. But the distant Hope of a Reversion was too cold a Temptation for a Spirit impatient as mine, that wanted immediate Possession of what my Heart was so differently set upon. The Allurements of a Theatre are still so strong in my Memory, that perhaps few, except those who have felt them, can conceive: And I am yet so far willing

ling to excuse my Folly, that I am convinc'd, were it possible to take off that Disgrace and Prejudice, which Custom has thrown upon the Profession of an Actor, many a well-born younger Brother, and Beauty of low Fortune would gladly have adorn'd the Theatre, who, by their not being able to brook such Dishonour to their Birth, have pass'd away their Lives decently unheeded and forgotten.

Many Years ago, when I was first in the Management of the Theatre, I remember a strong Instance, which will shew you what Degree of Ignominy the Profession of an Actor was then held at.—A Lady, with a real Title, whose female Indiscretions had occasion'd her Family to abandon her, being willing, in her Distress to make an honest Penny of what Beauty she had left, desired to be admitted as an Actress; when before she could receive our Answer, a Gentleman (probably by her Relation's Permission) advis'd us not to entertain her for Reasons easy to be guess'd. You may imagine we could not be so blind to our Interest as to make an honourable Family our unnecessary Enemies, by not taking his Advice; which the Lady too being sensible of, saw the Affair had its Difficulties; and therefore pursued it no farther. Now is it not hard that it should be a Doubt, whether this Lady's Condition or ours were the more melancholy? For here, you find her honest Endeavour, to get Bread from the Stage, was looked upon as an Addition of new Scandal to her former Dishonour!

nour! so that I am afraid, according to this way of thinking, had the same Lady stoop'd to have sold Patches and Pomatum, in a Band-box, from Door to Door, she might, in that Occupation have starv'd, with less Infamy, than had she relieved her Necessities by being famous on the Theatre. Whether this Prejudice may have arisen from the Abuses that so often have crept in upon the Stage, I am not clear in; tho' when that is grossly the Case, I will allow there ought to be no Limits set to the Contempt of it; yet in its lowest Condition, in my time, methinks there could have been no Pretence of preferring the Band-box to the Buskin. But this severe Opinion, whether merited, or not, is not the greatest Distress that this Profession is liable to.

I shall now give you another Anecdote, quite the reverse of what I have instanced, wherein you will see an Actress, as hardly used for an Act of Modesty (which without being a Prude, a Woman, even upon the Stage, may sometimes think it necessary not to throw off.) This too I am forced to premise, that the Truth of what I am going to tell you, may not be sneer'd at before it be known. About the Year 1717, a young Actress, of a desirable Person, sitting in an upper Box at the Opera, a military Gentleman thought this a proper Opportunity to secure a little Conversation with her; the Particulars of which were, probably, no more worth repeating, than it seems the *Damoiselle* then thought them worth listening to;

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for, notwithstanding the fine Things he said to her, she rather chose to give the Musick the Preference of her Attention: This Indifference was so offensive to his high Heart, that he began to change the Tender, into the Terrible, and, in short, proceeded at last, to treat her in a Style too grossly insulting, for the meanest Female Ear to endure unresented: Upon which, being beaten too far out of her Discretion, she turn'd hastily upon him, with an angry Look, and a Reply, which seem'd to set his Merit in so low a Regard, that he thought himself obliged, in Honour, to take his time to resent it: This was the full Extent of her Crime, which his Glory delayed no longer to punish, than 'till the next time she was to appear upon the Stage: There, in one of her best Parts, wherein she drew a favourable Regard and Approbation from the Audience, he, dispensing with the Respect which some People think due to a polite Assembly, began to interrupt her Performance, with such loud and various Notes of Mockery, as other young Men of Honour, in the same Place, have sometimes made themselves undauntedly merry with: Thus, deaf to all Murmurs, or Entreaties of those about him, he pursued his Point, even to throwing near her such Thrash, as no Person can be supposed to carry about him, unless to use on so particular an Occasion.

A Gentleman, then behind the Scenes, being shock'd at his unmanly Behaviour, was warm enough to say, That no Man, but a Fool, or

a Bully, cou'd be capable of insulting an Audience, or a Woman, in so monstrous a manner. The former valiant Gentleman, to whose Ear the Words were soon brought, by his Spies, whom he had plac'd behind the Scenes, to observe how the Action was taken there, came immediately from the Pit, in a Heat, and demanded to know of the Author of those Words, if he was the Person that spoke them? to which he calmly reply'd, That though he had never seen him before, yet, since he seem'd so earnest to be satisfy'd, he would do him the favour to own, That, indeed, the Words were his, and that they would be the last Words he should chuse to deny, whoever they might fall upon. To conclude, their Dispute was ended the next Morning in *Hyde-Park*, where the determined Combatant, who first ask'd for Satisfaction, was oblig'd afterwards to ask his Life too; whether he mended it or not, I have not yet heard; but his Antagonist, in a few Years after, died in one of the principal Posts of the Government.

Now though I have, sometimes, known these gallant Insulters of Audiences, draw themselves into Scrapes, which they have less honourably got out of; yet, alas! what has that avail'd? This generous publick-spirited Method of silencing a few, was but repelling the Disease in one Part, to make it break out in another: All Endeavours at Protection are new Provocations, to those who pride themselves in pushing their Courage to a Defiance of Humanity. Even

when a Royal Repentment has shewn itself, in the behalf of an injur'd Actor, it has been unable to defend him from farther Insults! an Instance of which happen'd in the late King *James's* time. Mr. *Smith* (whose Character as a Gentleman, could have been no way impeach'd, had he not degraded it, by being a celebrated Actor) had the Misfortune, in a Dispute with a Gentleman behind the Scences, to receive a Blow from him: The same Night an Account of this Action was carried to the King, to whom the Gentleman was represented so grossly in the wrong, that, the next Day, his Majesty sent to forbid him the Court upon it. This Indignity cast upon a Gentleman, only for having maltreated a Player, was look'd upon as the Concern of every Gentleman; and a Party was soon form'd to assert, and vindicate their Honour, by humbling this favour'd Actor, whose slight Injury had been judg'd equal to so severe a Notice. Accordingly, the next time *Smith* acted, he was receiv'd with a Chorus of Cat-calls, that soon convinc'd him, he should not be suffer'd to proceed in his Part; upon which, without the least Discomposure, he order'd the Curtain to be dropp'd; and having a competent Fortune of his own, thought the Conditions of adding to it, by his remaining upon the Stage, were too dear, and from that Day entirely quitted it. I shall make no Observation upon the King's Repentment, or on that of his good Subjects; how far either was, or was not right, is not the Point

Act I.

The SIEGE of DAMASCUS. Scene last



M^r. SMITH in the Character of PHOCYLAS.
Now to the field to gain the glorious Prize

Act II. RECRUITING OFFICER. Sc. I.



Engraved by T. G. Smith, & Published by T. G. Smith, & W. D. Smith, 17, Pall Mall.

MR. SMITH in the Character of PLUME.
*What think you now of a Purse of French Gold out of a
 Monsieur's pocket after you have dashed out his Brains
 with the But-End of your Firelock? Ah?*

Point I dispute for: Be that as it may, the unhappy Condition of the Actor was so far from being reliev'd by this Royal Interposition in his favour, that it was the worse for it.

While these sort of real Distresses, on the Stage, are so unavoidable, it is no wonder that young People of Sense (though of low Fortune) should be so rarely found, to supply a Succession of good Actors. Why then may we not, in some measure, impute the Scarcity of them, to the wanton Inhumanity of those Spectators, who have made it so terribly mean to appear there? Were there no ground for this Question, where could be the Disgrace of entering into a Society, whose Institution, when not abus'd, is a delightful School of Morality; and where to excel, requires as ample Endowments of Nature, as any one Profession (that of holy Institution excepted) whatsoever? But, alas! as *Shakespear* says,

*Where's that Palace, whereunto, sometimes
Foul things intrude not?*

Look into St. *Peter's* at *Rome*, and see what a profitable Farce is made of Religion there! Why then is an Actor more blemish'd than a Cardinal? While the Excellence of the one arises from his innocently seeming what he is not, and the Eminence of the other, from the most impious Fallacies that can be impos'd upon human Understanding? If the best things, therefore, are most liable to

Corruption, the Corruption of the Theatre is no Disproof of its innate and primitive Utility.

In this Light, therefore, all the Abuses of the Stage, all the low, loose, or immoral Supplements, to Wit, whether, in making Virtue ridiculous, or Vice agreeable, or in the decorated Nonsense and Absurdities of Pantomimical Trumpery, I give up to the Contempt of every sensible Spectator, as so much rank Theatrical Popery. But cannot still allow these Enormities to impeach the Profession, while they are so palpably owing to the deprav'd Taste of the Multitude. While Vice, and Farcical Folly, are the most profitable Commodities, why should we wonder that, time out of mind, the poor Comedian, when real Wit would bear no Price, should deal in what would bring him most ready Money? But this, you will say, is making the Stage a Nursery of Vice and Folly, or at least keeping an open Shop for it.—I grant it: But who do you expect should reform it? The Actors? Why so? If People are permitted to buy it, without blushing, the Theatrical Merchant seems to have an equal Right to the Liberty of selling it, without Reproach. That this Evil wants a Remedy, is not to be contested; nor can it be denied, that the Theatre is as capable of being preserv'd, by a Reformation, as Matters of more Importance; which, for the Honour of our National Taste, I could wish were attempted; and then, if it
could

could not subsist, under decent Regulations, by not being permitted to present any thing there, but what were *worthy* to be there, it would be time enough to consider, whether it were necessary to let it totally fall, or effectually support it.

Notwithstanding all my best Endeavours, to recommend the Profession of an Actor, to a more general Favour, I doubt, while it is liable to such Corruptions, and the Actor himself to such unlimited Insults, as I have already mention'd, I doubt, I say, we must still leave him a-drift, with his intrinsic Merit, to ride out the Storm, as well as he is able.

However, let us now turn to the other side of this Account, and see what Advantages stand there, to balance the Misfortunes I have laid before you. There we shall still find some valuable Articles of Credit, that, sometimes overpay his incidental Disgraces.

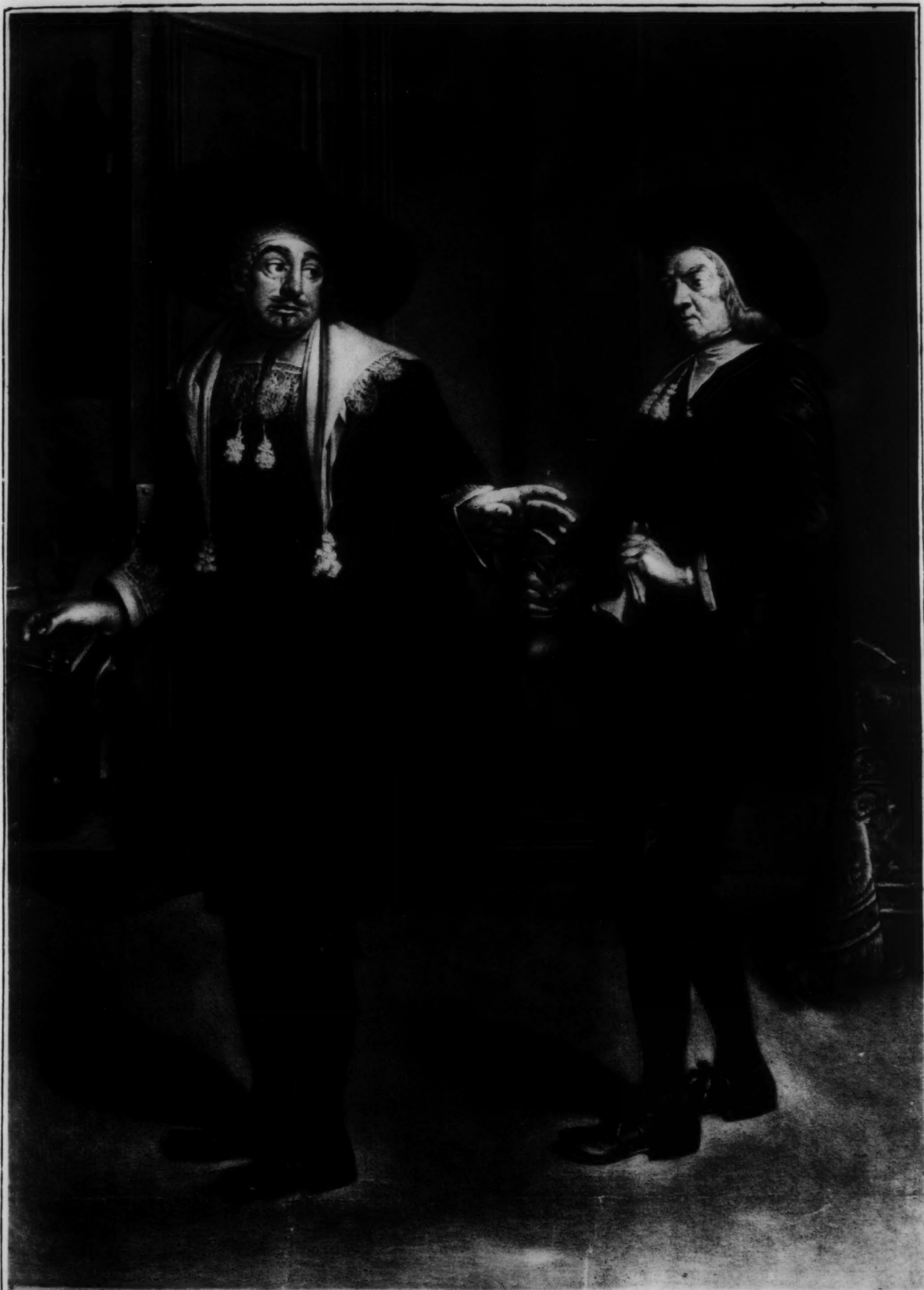
First, if he has Sense, he will consider, that as these Indignities are seldom or never offer'd him by People, that are remarkable for any one good Quality, he ought not to lay them too close to his Heart: He will know too, that when Malice, Envy, or a brutal Nature, can securely hide or fence themselves in a Multitude, Virtue, Merit, Innocence, and even sovereign Superiority, have been, and must be equally liable to their Insults; that therefore, when they fall upon him in the same manner, his intrinsic Value cannot be diminished by them: On the contrary, if, with a decent and

unruffled Temper, he lets them pass, the Disgrace will return upon his Aggressor, and perhaps warm the generous Spectator into a Partiality in his Favour.

That while he is conscious, That, as an Actor, he must be always in the Hands of Injustice, it does him at least this involuntary Good, that it keeps him in a settled Resolution to avoid all Occasions of provoking it, or of even offending the lowest Enemy, who, at the Expence of a Shilling, may publickly revenge it.

That, if he excels on the Stage, and is irreproachable in his Personal Morals, and Behaviour, his Profession is so far from being an Impediment, that it will be oftner a just Reason for his being receiv'd among People of Condition with Favour; and sometimes with a more special Distinction, than the best, though more profitable Trade he might have follow'd, could have recommended him to.

That this is a Happiness to which several Actors, within my Memory, as *Besterten*, *Smith*, *Montfort*, *Captain Griffin*, and *Mrs. Bracegirdle* (yet living) have arrived at; to which I may add the late celebrated *Mrs. Oldfield*. Now let us suppose these Persons, the Men, for example, to have been all eminent Mercers, and the Women as famous Milliners, can we imagine, that merely as such, though endow'd with the same natural Understanding, they could have been call'd into the same honourable Parties of Conversation? People of Sense
and



Van Bleeck Pinxt. 1738.

Griffin & Johnson
in the Characters of Tribulation and Ananias

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Van Bleeck Pinxt. 1738.

Griffin & Johnson
in the Characters of Tribulation and Ananias



J. Richardson sculp.

In the Collection of D^r Mead.

Impress'd T. & P. Knappin London 1738.

J. Oliver pinx.

and Condition, could not but know, it was impossible they could have had such various Excellencies on the Stage, without having something naturally valuable in them: And I will take upon me to affirm, who knew them all living, that there was not one of the Number, who were not capable of supporting a Variety of Spirited Conversation, tho' the Stage were never to have been the Subject of it.

That, to have trod the Stage, has not always been thought a Disqualification from more honourable Employments; several have had military Commissions; *Carlisle* and *Wiltshire* were both kill'd Captains; one, in King *William's* Reduction of *Ireland*; and the other, in his first War, in *Flanders*; and the famous *Ben. Johnson*, tho' an unsuccessful Actor, was afterwards made Poet-Laureat.

To these laudable Distinctions, let me add one more; that of Publick Applause, which, when truly merited, is, perhaps, one of the most agreeable Gratifications that venial Vanity can feel. A Happiness, almost peculiar to the Actor, insomuch that the best Tragick Writer, however numerous his separate Admirers may be, yet, to unite them into one general Act of Praise, to receive at once, those thundering Peals of Approbation, which a crowded Theatre throws out, he must still call in the Assistance of the skilful Actor, to raise and partake of them.

In

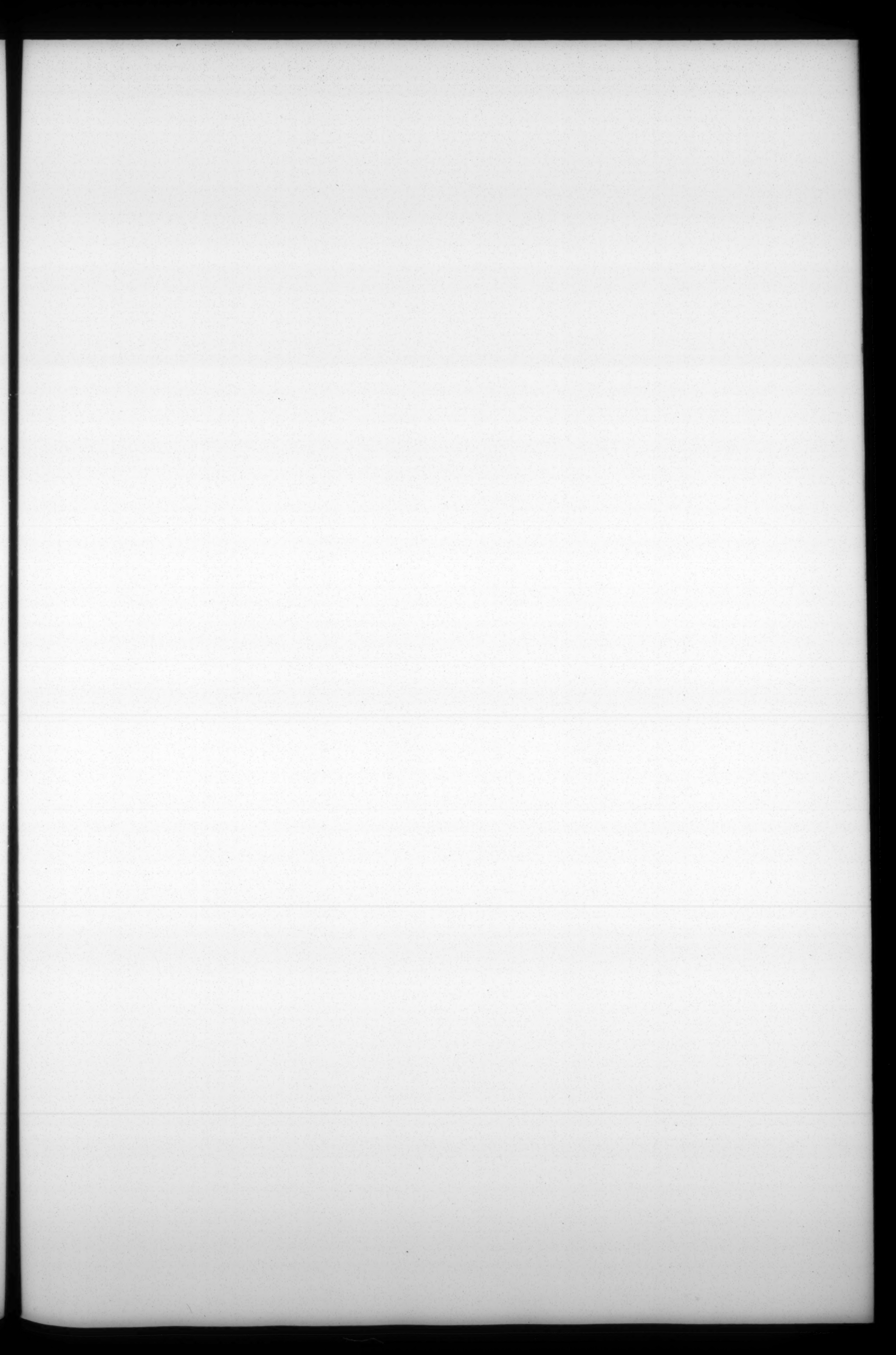
In a Word, 'twas in this flattering Light only, though not perhaps so thoroughly consider'd, I look'd upon the Life of an Actor, when but eighteen Years of Age; nor can you wonder, if the Temptations were too strong for so warm a Vanity as mine to resist; but whether excusable, or not, to the Stage, at length, I came, and it is from thence, chiefly, your Curiosity, if you have any left, is to expect a farther Account of me.



C H A P. IV.

A short View of the Stage, from the Year 1660 to the Revolution. The King's and Duke's Company united, compos'd the best Set of English Actors yet known. Their several Theatrical Characters.

TH O' I have only promis'd you an Account of all the material Occurrences of the Theatre during my own Time; yet there was one which happen'd not above seven Years before my Admission to it, which may be as well worth notice, as the first great Revolution of it, in which, among Numbers, I was involv'd. And as the one will lead you into a clearer View of the other, it may therefore be previously necessary to let you know that

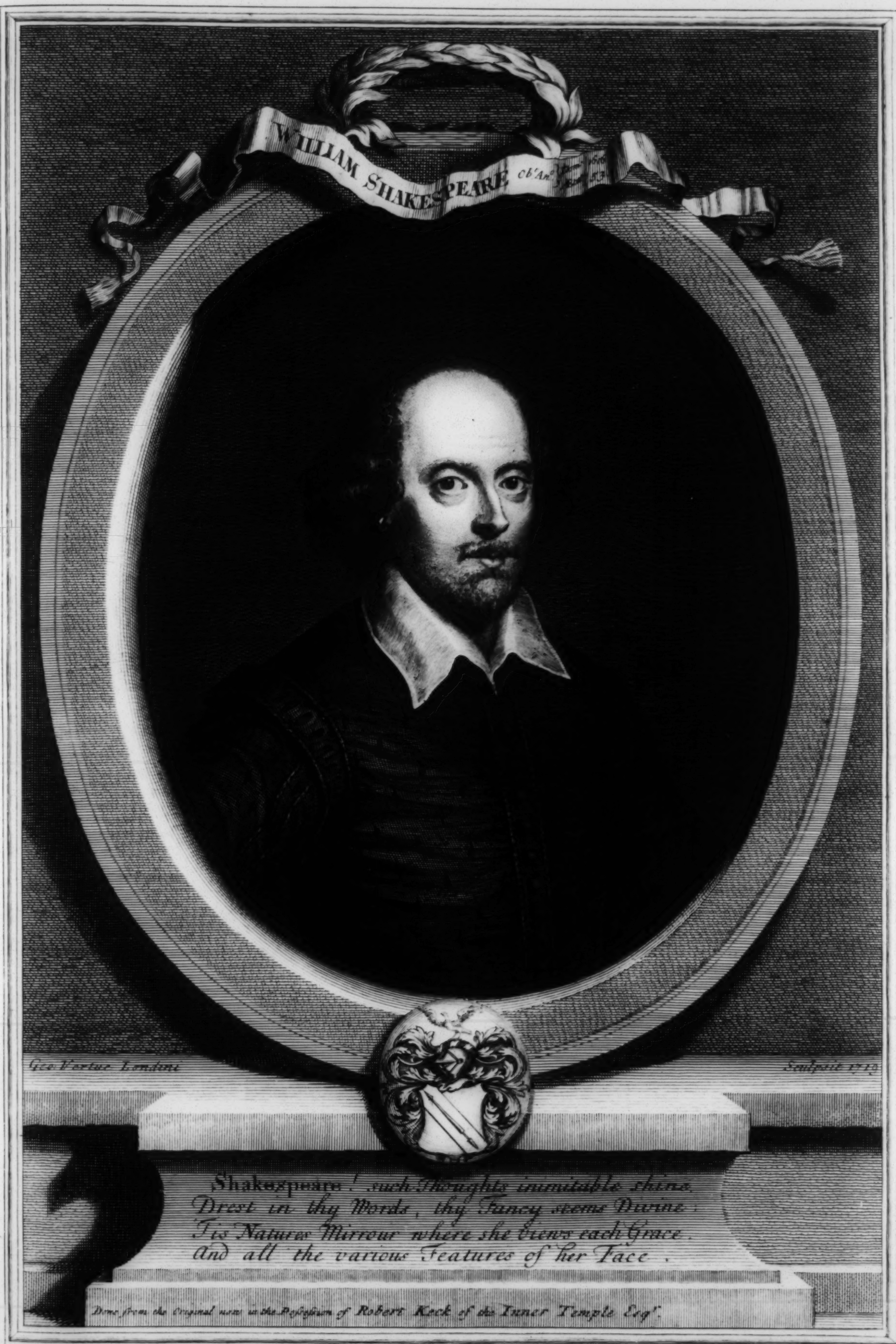




King *Charles II.* at his Restoration, granted two Patents, one to Sir *William Davenant*, and the other to *Henry Killigrew*, Esq; and their several Heirs and Assigns, for ever, for the forming of two distinct Companies of Comedians: The first were call'd the *King's Servants*, and acted at the Theatre-Royal in *Drury-Lane*; and the other the *Duke's Company*, who acted at the Duke's Theatre in *Dorset-Garden*. About ten of the King's Company were on the Royal Household Establishment, having each ten Yards of Scarlet Cloth, with a proper Quantity of Lace allow'd them for Liveries; and in their Warrants from the Lord Chamberlain, were stiled *Gentlemen of the Great Chamber*: Whether the like Appointments were extended to the Duke's Company, I am not certain; but they were both in high Estimation with the Publick, and so much the Delight and Concern of the Court, that they were not only supported by its being frequently present at their publick *Presentations*, but by its taking Cognizance even of their private Government, infomuch, that their particular Differences, Pretensions, or Complaints, were generally ended by the *King*, or *Duke's* Personal Command or Decision. Besides their being thorough Masters of their Art, these Actors set forwards with two critical Advantages, which perhaps may never happen again in many Ages. The one was, their immediate opening after the so long Interdiction of Plays, during the Civil War, and the Anarchy

chy that followed it. What eager Appetites from so long a Fast, must the Guests of those Times have had, to that high and fresh Variety of Entertainments, which *Shakespeare* had left prepared for them? Never was a Stage so provided! A hundred Years are wasted, and another silent Century well advanced, and yet what unborn Age shall say, *Shakespeare* has his Equal! How many shining Actors have the warm Scenes of his Genius given to Posterity? without being himself, in his Action, equal to his Writing! A strong Proof that Actors, like Poets, must be born such. Eloquence and Elocution are quite different Talents: *Shakespeare* could write *Hamlet*; but Tradition tells us, That the *Ghost*, in the same Play, was one of his best Performances as an Actor: Nor is it within the reach of Rule or Precept to complete either of them. Instruction, 'tis true, may guard them equally against Faults or Absurdities, but there it stops; Nature must do the rest: To excel in either Art, is a self-born Happiness, which something more than good Sense must be the Mother of.

The other Advantage I was speaking of, is, that before the Restoration, no Actresses had ever been seen upon the *English* State. The Characters of Women, on former Theatres, were perform'd by Boys, or young Men of the most effeminate Aspect. And what Grace, or Master-strokes of Action can we conceive such ungain Hoydens to have been capable of? This Defect was so well considered by *Shakespeare*,
that



Geo. Vertue Londini

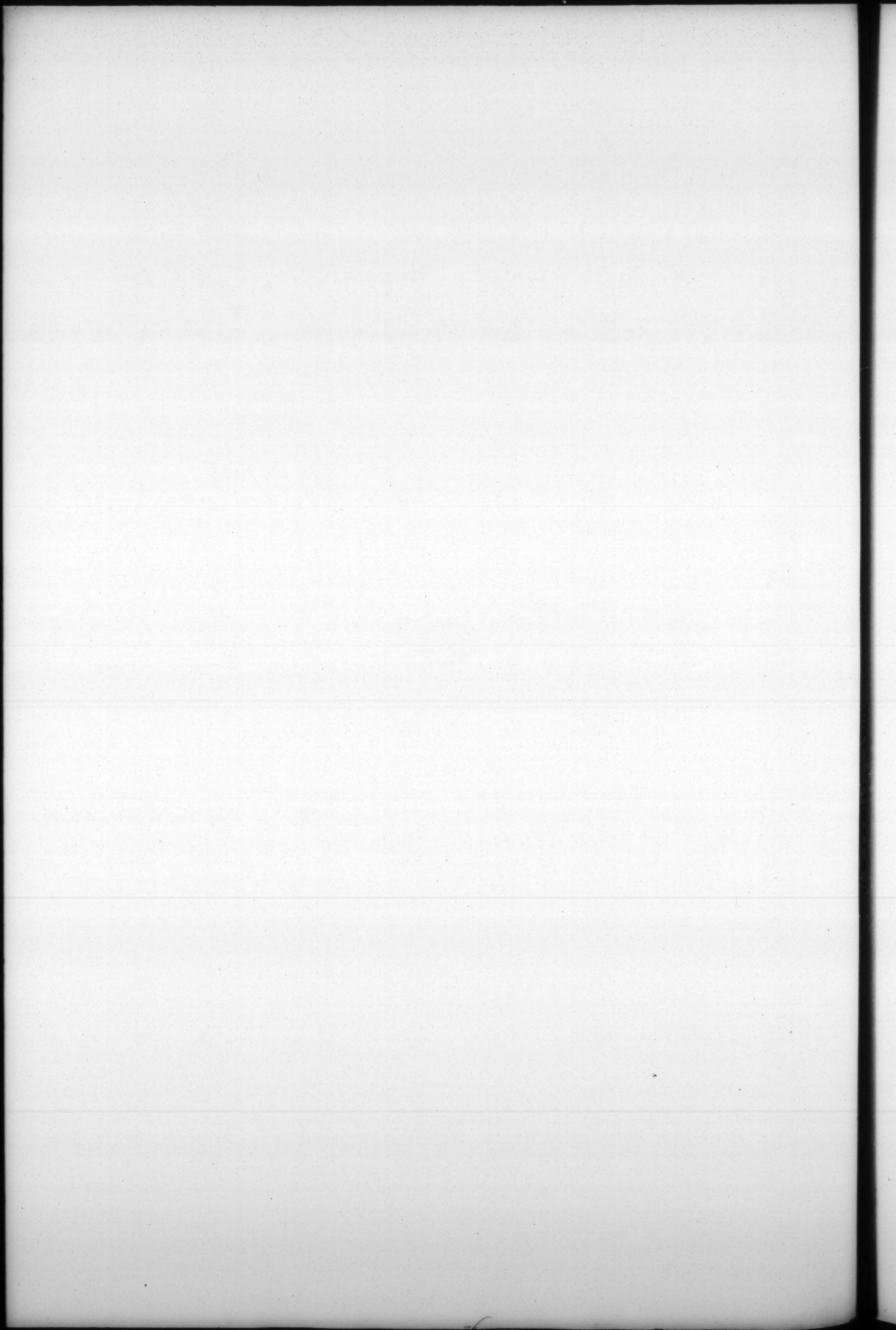
Sculpsit 1713

Shakespeare! such Thoughts inimitable shine,
Drest in thy Words, thy Fancy seems Divine.
Tis Nature's Mirrour where she views each Grace,
And all the various Features of her Face.

Done from the Original now in the Possession of Robert Keck of the Inner Temple Esq.

Sold by A. Vertue

in Newbain Street Bro



that in few of his Plays, he has any greater Dependence upon the Ladies, than in the Innocence and Simplicity of a *Desdemona*, an *Ophelia*, or in the short Specimen of a fond and virtuous *Portia*. The additional Objects then of real, beautiful Women, could not but draw a Proportion of new Admirers to the Theatre. We may imagine too, that these Actresses were not ill chosen, when it is well known, that more than one of them had Charms sufficient at their leisure Hours, to calm and mollify the Cares of Empire. Besides these peculiar Advantages, they had a private Rule or Argument, which both Houses were happily ty'd down to, which was, that no Play acted at one House, should ever be attempted at the other. All the capital Plays therefore of *Shakespeare*, *Fletcher*, and *Ben. Johnson*, were divided between them, by the Approbation of the Court, and their own alternate Choice: So that when *Hart* was famous for *Othello*, *Betterton* had no less a Reputation for *Hamlet*. By this Order the Stage was supply'd with a greater Variety of Plays, than could possibly have been shewn, had both Companies been employ'd at the same time upon the same Play; which Liberty too, must have occasion'd such frequent Repetitions of 'em, by their opposite Endeavours to forestall and anticipate one another, that the best Actors in the World must have grown tedious and tasteless to the Spectator: For what Pleasure is not languid to Satiety? It was therefore one of our greatest Happi-
nesses

nesses (during my time of being in the Management of the Stage) that we had a certain Number of select Plays, which no other Company had the good Fortune to make a tolerable Figure in, and consequently, could find little or no Account, by acting them against us. These Plays therefore, for many Years, by not being too often seen, never fail'd to bring us crowded Audiences; and it was to this Conduct we ow'd no little Share of our Prosperity. But when four Houses are at once (as very lately they were) all permitted to act the same Pieces, let three of them perform never so ill, when Plays come to be so haras'd and hackney'd out to the common People (half of which too, perhaps would as lieve see them at one House as another) the best Actors will soon feel that the Town has enough of them.

I know it is the common Opinion, That the more Play-houses, the more Emulation; I grant it; but what has this Emulation ended in? Why, a daily Contention which shall soonest surfeit you with the best Plays; so that when what *ought* to please, can no *longer* please, your Appetite, is again to be rais'd by such monstrous Presentations, as dishonour the Taste of a civiliz'd People. If, indeed, to our several Theatres, we could raise a proportionable Number of good Authors, to give them all different Employment, then, perhaps, the Publick might profit from their Emulation: But while good Writers are so scarce, and undaunted Criticks so plenty, I am afraid a good Play, and a blazing
Star,

Star, will be equal Rarities. This voluptuous Expedient, therefore, of indulging the Taste with several Theatres, will amount to much the same Variety as that of a certain Oeconomist, who, to enlarge his Hospitality, would have two Puddings and two Legs of Mutton, for the same Dinner.—But, to resume the Thread of my History.

These two excellent Companies were both prosperous for some few Years, 'till their Variety of Plays began to be exhausted: Then of course, the better Actors (which the King's seem to have been allowed) could not fail of drawing the greater Audiences. Sir *William Davenant*, therefore, Master of the Duke's Company, to make Head against their Success, was forced to add Spectacle and Musick to Action; and to introduce a new Species of Plays, since call'd Dramatick Opera's, of which kind were the *Tempest*, *Psyche*, *Circe*, and others, all set off with the most expensive Decorations of Scenes and Habits, with the best Voices and Dancers.

This sensual Supply of Sight and Sound, coming in to the Assistance of the weaker Party, it was no Wonder they should grow too hard for Sense and simple Nature, when it is consider'd how many more People there are, that can see and hear, than think and judge. So wanton a Change of the publick Taste, therefore, began to fall as heavy upon the King's Company, as their greater Excellence in Action, had, before, fallen upon their Competitors: Of which
Encroach-

80 *The LIFE of*

Encroachment upon Wit, several good Prologues in those Days frequently complain'd.

But alas! what can Truth avail, when its Dependance is much more upon the Ignorant, than the sensible Auditor? a poor Satisfaction, that the due Praise given to it, must at last, sink into the cold Comfort of—*Laudatur & Alget*. Unprofitable Praise can hardly give it a *Soup maigre*. Taste and Fashion, with us, have always had Wings, and fly from one publick Spectacle to another so wantonly, that I have been inform'd, by those, who remember it, that a famous Puppet-shew, in *Salisbury* Change (then standing where *Cecil-Street* now is) so far distress'd these two celebrated Companies, that they were reduced to petition the King for Relief against it: Nor ought we perhaps to think this strange, when, if I mistake not, *Terence* himself reproaches the *Roman* Auditors of his Time, with the like Fondness for the *Funambuli*, the Rope-dancers. Not to dwell too long therefore upon that Part of my History, which I have only collected, from oral Tradition, I shall content myself with telling you, that *Mokun*, and *Hart* now growing old (for, above thirty Years before this time, they had severally borne the King's Commission of Major and Captain, in the Civil Wars) and the younger Actors, as *Goodman*, *Clark*, and others, being impatient to get into their Parts, and growing intractable, the Audiences too of both Houses then falling off, the Patentees of each, by the King's Advice, which perhaps amounted

amounted to a Command, united their Interests, and both Companies into one, exclusive of all others, in the Year 1684. This Union was, however, so much in favour of the Duke's Company, that *Hart* left the Stage upon it, and *Mobun* survived not long after.

One only Theatre being now in Possession of the whole Town, the united Patentees imposed their own Terms, upon the Actors; for the Profits of acting were then divided into twenty Shares, ten of which went to the Proprietors, and the other Moiety to the principal Actors, in such Sub-divisions as their different Merit might pretend to. These Shares of the Patentees were promiscuously sold out to Money-making Persons, call'd Adventurers, who, tho' utterly ignorant of Theatrical Affairs, were still admitted to a proportionate Vote in the Management of them; all particular Encouragements to Actors were by them, of consequence, look'd upon as so many Sums deducted from their private Dividends. While therefore the Theatrical Hive had so many Drones in it, the labouring Actors, sure, were under the highest Discouragement, if not a direct State of Oppression. Their Hardship will at least appear in a much stronger Light, when compar'd to our later Situation, who with scarce half their Merit, succeeded to be Sharers under a Patent upon five times easier Conditions: For, as they had but half the Profits divided among ten, or more of them; we had three fourths of the whole Profits, divided only among three of

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us:

us: And as they might be said to have ten Task-masters over them, we never had but one Assistant Manager (not an Actor) join'd with us; who, by the Crown's Indulgence, was sometimes too of our own chusing. Under this heavy Establishment then groan'd this United Company, when I was first admitted into the lowest Rank of it. How they came to be relieved by King *William's* Licence in 1695, how they were again disperfed, early in Queen *Anne's* Reign; and from what Accidents Fortune took better care of Us, their unequal Successors, will be told in its Place: But to prepare you for the opening so large a Scene of their History, methinks I ought, (in Justice to their Memory too) to give you such particular Characters of their Theatrical Merit, as in my plain Judgment they seem'd to deserve. Presuming then, that this Attempt may not be disagreeable to the Curious, or the true Lovers of the Theatre, take it without farther Preface.

In the Year 1690, when I first came into this Company, the principal Actors then at the Head of it were,

Of Men.	Of Women.
Mr. <i>Betterton</i> ,	Mrs. <i>Betterton</i> ,
Mr. <i>Monfort</i> ,	Mrs. <i>Barry</i> ,
Mr. <i>Kynaston</i> ,	Mrs. <i>Leigh</i> ,
Mr. <i>Sandford</i> ,	Mrs. <i>Buttler</i> ,
Mr. <i>Nokes</i> ,	Mrs. <i>Monfort</i> , and
Mr. <i>Underbil</i> , and	Mrs. <i>Bracegirdle</i> .
Mr. <i>Leigh</i> .	

+

These



B. Ponce sculpt. del. 1729.

WILHELMUS DE DERDE
KONING VAN ENGELAND.
&c. &c. &c.



Mr Thomas Betterton
Totus Mundus Agit Astrionem

These Actors, whom I have selected from their Cotemporaries, were all original Masters in their different Stile, not mere auricular Imitators of one another, which commonly is the highest Merit of the middle Rank; but Self-judges of Nature, from whose various Lights they only took their true Instruction. If in the following Account of them, I may be obliged to hint at the Faults of others, I never mean such Observations should extend to those who are now in Possession of the Stage; for as I design not my Memoirs shall come down to their Time, I would not lie under the Imputation of speaking in their Disfavour to the Publick, whose Approbation they must depend upon for Support. But to my Purpose.

Betterton was an Actor, as *Shakespear* was an Author, both without Competitors! form'd for the mutual Assistance, and Illustration of each other's Genius! How *Shakespear* wrote, all Men who have a Taste for Nature may read, and know—but with what higher Rapture would he still be *read*, could they conceive how *Betterton* play'd him! Then might they know, the one was born alone to speak what the other only knew, to write! Pity it is, that the momentary Beauties flowing from an harmonious Elocution, cannot like those of Poetry, be their own Record! That the animated Graces of the Player can live no longer than the instant Breath and Motion that presents them; or at best can but faintly glimmer through the Memory, or imperfect Attestation of a few sur-

viving Spectators. Could *how* *Betterton* spoke be as easily known as *what* he spoke; then might you see the Muse of *Shakespeare* in her Triumph, with all her Beauties in their best Array, rising into real Life, and charming her Beholders. But alas! since all this is so far out of the reach of Description, how shall I shew you *Betterton*? Should I therefore tell you, that all the *Othellos*, *Hamlets*, *Hotspurs*, *Machbeths*, and *Brutus's*, whom you may have seen since his Time, have fallen far short of him; this still would give you no Idea of his particular Excellence. Let us see then what a particular Comparison may do! whether that may yet draw him nearer to you?

You have seen a *Hamlet* perhaps, who, on the first Appearance of his Father's Spirit, has thrown himself into all the straining Vociferation requisite to express Rage and Fury, and the House has thunder'd with Applause; tho' the mis-guided Actor was all the while (as *Shakespeare* terms it) tearing a Passion into Rags.—I am the more bold to offer you this particular Instance, because the late Mr. *Addison*, while I sat by him, to see this Scene acted, made the same Observation, asking me with some Surprise, if I thought *Hamlet* should be in so violent a Passion with the Ghost, which tho' it might have astonish'd, it had not provok'd him? for you may observe that in this beautiful Speech, the Passion never rises beyond an almost breathless Astonishment, or an Impatience, limited by filial Reverence, to enquire



*The R.^t Hon.^{ble} Joseph Addison Esq.^r
one of his Majesty's Secretaries of State.*

S.R. Imp. et Mag. Brit. Bar. pinxit

Simon fecit et excudit

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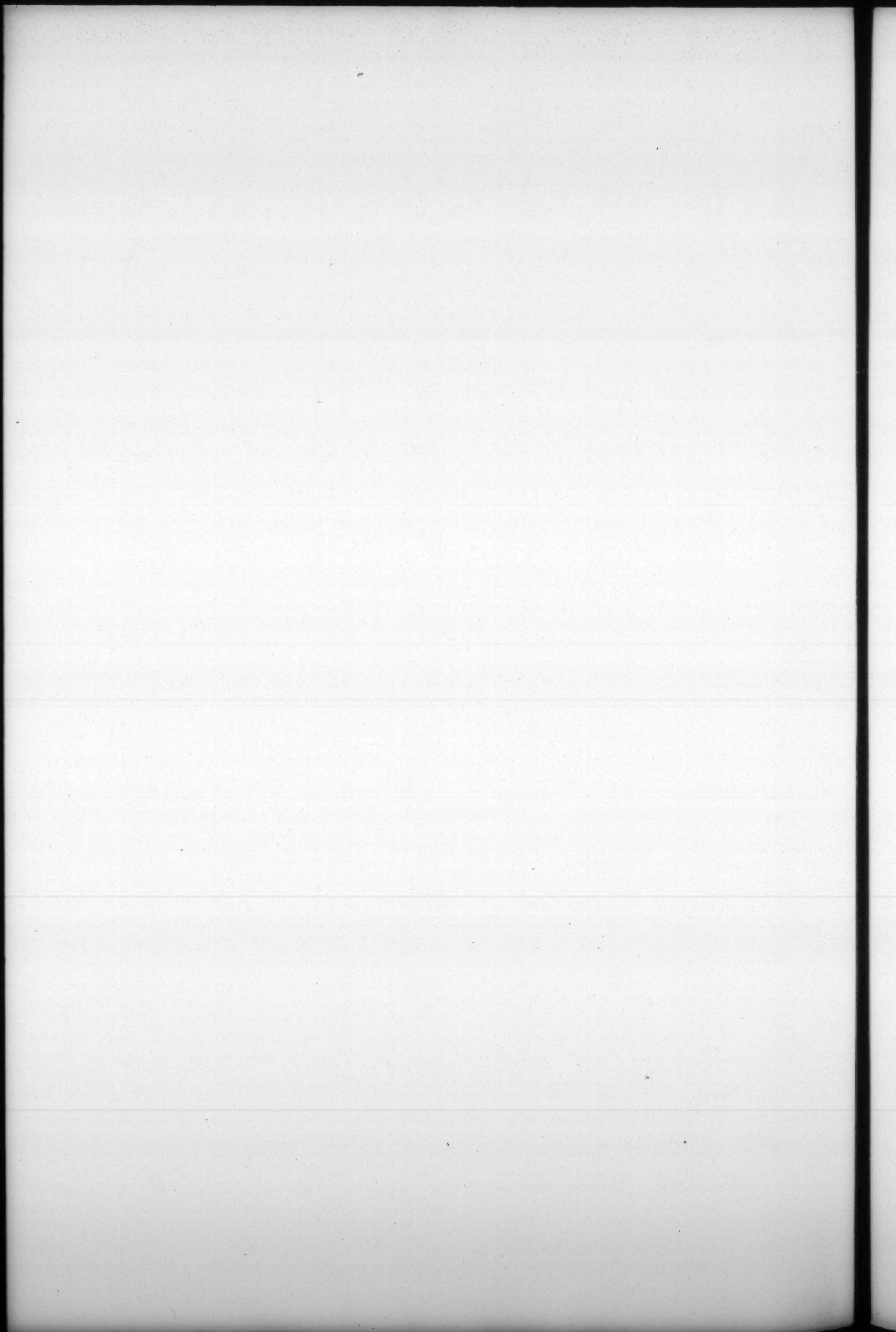
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*The R.^t Hon.^{ble} Joseph Addison Esq.^r
one of his Majesty's Secretaries of State.*

G. Kneller del. S. R. Imp. et Mag. Brit. Bar. pinxit

Simon Scot. sculpsit



quire into the suspected Wrongs that may have rais'd him from his peaceful Tomb! and a Desire to know what a Spirit so seemingly distressed, might wish or enjoin a sorrowful Son to execute towards his future Quiet in the Grave? This was the Light into which *Betterton* threw this Scene; which he open'd with a Pause of mute Amazement! then rising slowly, to a solemn, trembling Voice, he made the Ghost equally terrible to the Spectator, as to himself! and in the descriptive Part of the natural Emotions which the ghastly Vision gave him, the Boldness of his Expostulation was still govern'd by Decency, manly, but not braving; his Voice never rising into that seeming Outrage, or wild Defiance of what he naturally rever'd, But alas! to preserve this medium, between mouthing, and meaning too little, to keep the Attention more pleasingly awake, by a temper'd Spirit, than by mere Vehemence of Voice, is of all the Master-strokes of an Actor the most difficult to reach. In this none yet have equall'd *Betterton*. But I am unwilling to shew his Superiority only by recounting the Errors of those, who now cannot answer to them, let their farther Failings therefore be forgotten! or rather, shall I in some measure excuse them? For I am not yet sure, that they might not be as much owing to the false Judgment of the Spectator, as the Actor. While the Million are so apt to be transported, when the Drum of their Ear is so roundly rattled; while they take the Life of Elocution

to lie in the Strength of the Lungs, it is no wonder the Actor, whose End is Applause, should be also tempted, at this easy rate, to excite it. Shall I go a little farther? and allow that this Extreme is more pardonable than its opposite Error? I mean that dangerous Affectation of the Monotone, or solemn Sameness of Pronunciation, which to my Ear is insupportable; for of all Faults that so frequently pass upon the Vulgar, that of Flatness will have the fewest Admirers. That this is an Error of ancient standing seems evident by what *Hamlet* says, in his Instructions to the Players, *viz.*

Be not too tame, neither, &c.

The Actor, doubtless, is as strongly ty'd down to the Rules of *Horace* as the Writer.

*Si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi——*

He that feels not himself the Passion he would raise, will talk to a sleeping Audience: But this never was the Fault of *Betterton*; and it has often amaz'd me to see those who soon came after him, throw out in some Parts of a Character, a just and graceful Spirit, which *Betterton* himself could not but have applauded. And yet in the equally shining Passages of the same Character, have heavily dragg'd the Sentiment along like a dead Weight; with a long-ton'd Voice, and absent Eye, as if they had fairly forgot what they were about: If
you

you have never made this Observation, I am contented you should not know where to apply it.

A farther Excellence in *Betterton*, was, that he could vary his Spirit to the different Characters he acted. Those wild impatient Starts, that fierce and flashing Fire, which he threw into *Hotspur*, never came from the unruffled Temper of his *Brutus* (for I have, more than once, seen a *Brutus* as warm as *Hotspur*) when the *Betterton Brutus* was provok'd, in his Dispute with *Cassius*, his Spirit flew only to his Eye; his steady Look alone supply'd that Terror, which he disdain'd an Intemperance in his Voice should rise to. Thus, with a settled Dignity of Contempt, like an unheeding Rock, he repelled upon himself the Foam of *Cassius*. Perhaps the very Words of *Shakespeare* will better let you into my Meaning:

*Must I give way, and room, to your rash Choler?
Shall I be frighted when a Madman stares?*

And a little after,

There is no Terror, Cassius, in your Looks! &c.

Not but in some Part of this Scene, where he reproaches *Cassius*, his Temper is not under this Suppression, but opens into that Warmth which becomes a Man of Virtue; yet this is that *Hasty Spark* of Anger, which *Brutus* himself endeavours to excuse.

But with whatever strength of Nature we see the Poet shew, at once, the Philosopher and

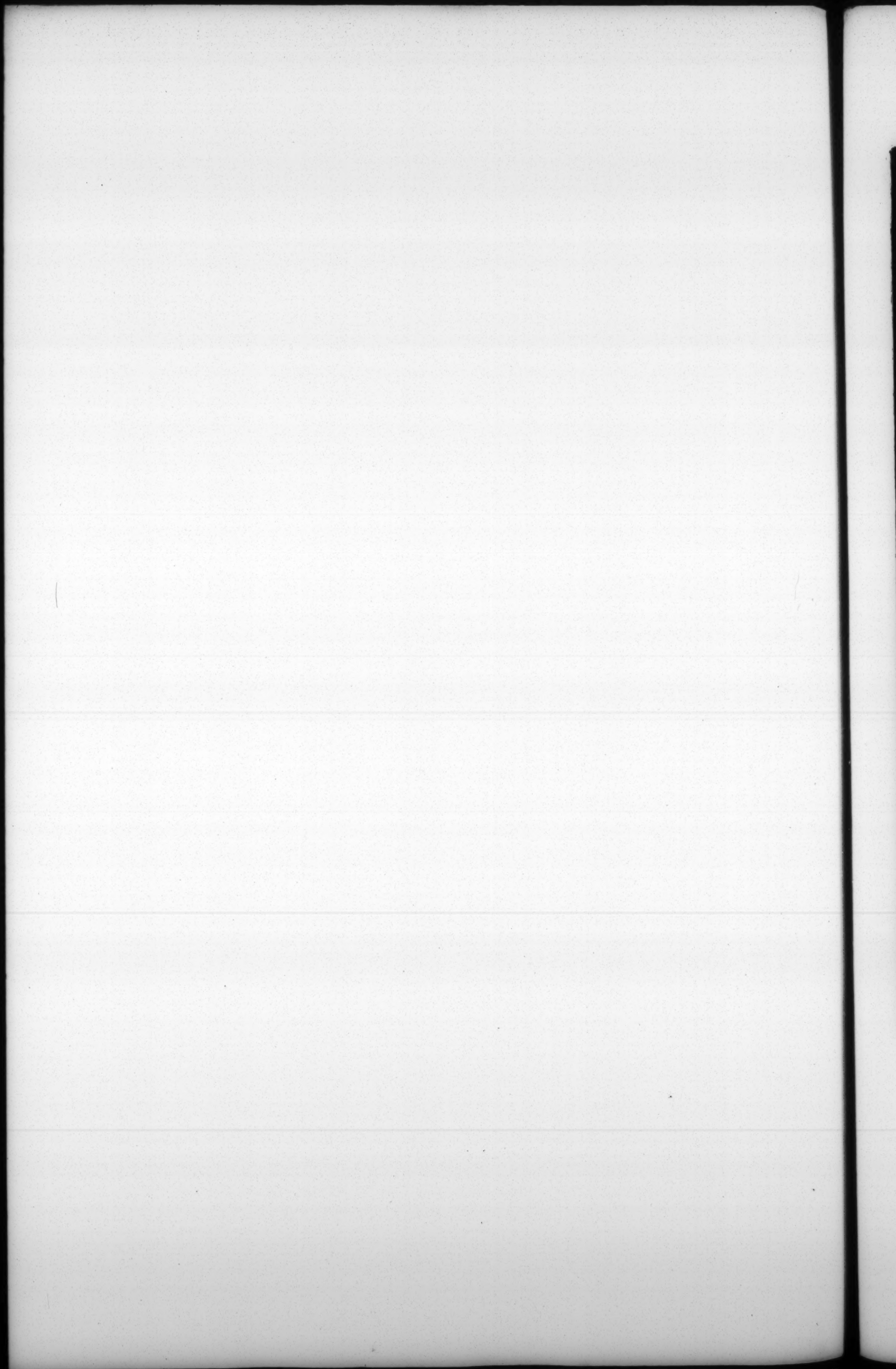
the Heroe, yet the Image of the Actor's Excellence will be still imperfect to you, unless Language could put Colours in our Words to paint the Voice with.

Et, si vis similem pingere, pingere sonum, is enjoining an Impossibility. The most that a *Vandyke* can arrive at, is to make his Portraits of great Persons seem to *think*; a *Shakespear* goes farther yet, and tells you *what* his Pictures thought; a *Betterton* steps beyond 'em both, and calls them from the Grave, to breathe, and be themselves again, in Feature, Speech, and Motion. When the skilful Actor shews you all these Powers at once united, and gratifies at once your Eye, your Ear, your Understanding. To conceive the Pleasure rising from such Harmony, you must have been present at it! 'tis not to be told you!

There cannot be a stronger Proof of the Charms of harmonious Elocution, than the many, even unnatural Scenes and Flights of the false sublime it has lifted into Applause. In what Raptures have I seen an Audience, at the furious Fustian and turgid Rants in *Nat. Lee's Alexander the Great*! For though I can allow this Play a few great Beauties, yet it is not without its extravagant Blemishes. Every Play of the same Author has more or less of them. Let me give you a Sample from this. *Alexander*, in a full crowd of Courtiers, without being occasionally call'd or provok'd to it, falls into this Rhapsody of Vain-glory.

Can







Deben print

NATH^L LEE the MAD POET.

J. Watts fecit

(From an Original Picture in the Collection of Sir Rich^t Cosway Esq^r R. A.)

Author of Eleven Tragedies, which were received with applause, two of them were written after he had been confined in Bedlam four Years, he Attempted Acting, but did not succeed, he was found dead in the Street Anno 1690 after a Night of Riot and Extravagance.

Through all the innermost Chambers of the Sky, / May there not be a glimpse, or Shiny Spark, / But Gods meet Gods & jostle in the room.

Pub^d as the Act, directed Sep^r 24. 1778. by John Watts Printer, George Street Hanover Square London.



CARLO LE BRUN
PITTORE

La Dame, l'empalme del.

Carlo Le Brun, l'empalme del.

Can none remember? Yes, I know all must!

And therefore they shall know it agen.

*When Glory, like the dazzling Eagle, stood
Perch'd on my Beaver, in the Granic Flood,
When Fortune's Self, my Standard trembling bore,
And the pale Fates stood frighted on the Shore,
When the Immortals on the Billows rode,
And I myself appear'd the leading God.*

When these flowing Numbers came from the Mouth of a *Betterton*, the Multitude no more desired Sense to them, than our musical *Connoisseurs* think it essential in the celebrated *Airs* of an *Italian Opera*. Does not this prove, that there is very near as much Enchantment in the well-governed Voice of an Actor, as in the sweet Pipe of an Eunuch? If I tell you, there was no one Tragedy, for many Years, more in favour with the Town than *Alexander*, to what must we impute this its command of publick Admiration? Not to its intrinsic Merit, surely, if it swarms with Passages like this I have shewn you! If this Passage has Merit, let us see what Figure it would make upon Canvas, what sort of Picture would rise from it. If *Le Brun*, who was famous for painting the Battles of this Heroe, had seen this lofty Description, what one Image could he have possibly taken from it? In what Colours would he have shewn us *Glory perch'd upon a Beaver*? How would he have drawn *Fortune trembling*? Or, indeed, what use could he

he have made of *pale Fates*, or *Immortals* riding upon *Billows*, with this blustering *God* of his own making at the *head* of them? Where, then, must have lain the Charm, that once made the Publick so partial to this Tragedy? Why plainly, in the Grace and Harmony of the Actor's Utterance. For the Actor himself is not accountable for the false Poetry of his Author; That, the Hearer is to judge of; if it passes upon him, the Actor can have no Quarrel to it; who, if the Periods given him are round, smooth, spirited, and high-sounding, even in a false Passion, must throw out the same Fire and Grace, as may be required in one justly rising from Nature; where those his Excellencies will then be only more pleasing in proportion to the Taste of his Hearer. And I am of opinion, that to the extraordinary Success of this very Play, we may impute the Corruption of so many Actors, and Tragick Writers, as were immediately misled by it. The unskilful Actor, who imagin'd all the Merit of delivering those blazing Rants, lay only in the Strength, and strain'd Exertion of the Voice, began to tear his Lungs, upon every false, or slight Occasion, to arrive at the same Applause. And it is from hence I date our having seen the same Reason prevalent for above fifty Years. Thus equally misguided too, many a barren-brain'd Author has stream'd into a frothy flowing Style, pompously rolling into sounding Periods, signifying — roundly nothing; of which Number, in

in some of my former Labours, I am something more than suspicious, that I may myself have made one, but to keep a little closer to *Betterton*.

When this favourite Play I am speaking of, from its being too frequently acted, was worn out, and came to be deserted by the Town, upon the sudden Death of *Monfort*, who had play'd *Alexander* with Success, for several Years, the Part was given to *Betterton*, which, under this great Disadvantage of the Satiety it had given, he immediately reviv'd with so new a Lustre, that for three Days together it fill'd the House; and had his then declining Strength been equal to the Fatigue the Action gave him, it probably might have doubled its Success; an uncommon Instance of the Power and intrinsic Merit of an Actor. This I mention not only to prove what irresistible Pleasure may arise from a judicious Elocution, with scarce Sense to assist it; but to shew you too, that tho' *Betterton* never wanted Fire, and Force, when his Character demanded it; yet, where it was not demanded, he never prostituted his Power to the low Ambition of a false Applause. And further, that when, from a too advanced Age, he resigned that toilsome Part of *Alexander*, the Play, for many Years after never was able to impose upon the Publick; and I look upon his so particularly supporting the false Fire and Extravagancies of that Character, to be a more surprizing Proof of his Skill, than his being eminent in those of

Shake-

Shakespear; because there, Truth and Nature coming to his Assistance he had not the same Difficulties to combat, and consequently, we must be less amaz'd at his Success, where we are more able to account for it.

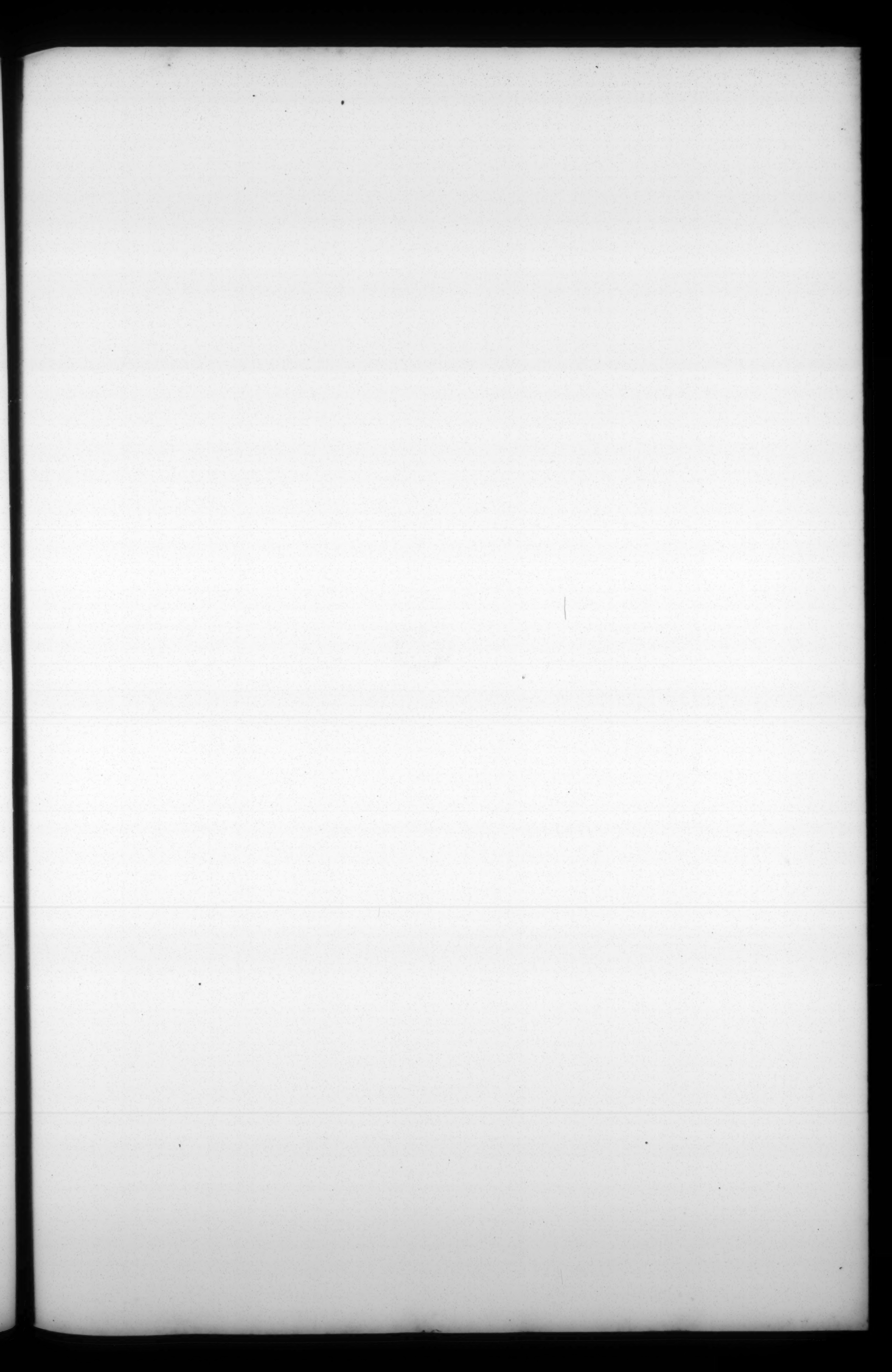
Notwithstanding the extraordinary Power he shew'd in blowing *Alexander* once more into a blaze of Admiration, *Betterton* had so just a sense of what was true, or false Applause, that I have heard him say, he never thought any kind of it equal to an attentive Silence; that there were many ways of deceiving an Audience into a loud one; but to keep them hush'd and quiet, was an Applause which only Truth and Merit could arrive at: Of which Art, there never was an equal Master to himself. From these various Excellencies, he had so full a Possession of the Esteem and Regard of his Auditors, that upon his Entrance into every Scene, he seem'd to seize upon the Eyes and Ears of the Giddy and Inadvertent! To have talk'd or look'd another way, would then have been thought Insensibility or Ignorance. In all his Soliloquies of moment, the strong Intelligence of his Attitude and Aspect, drew you into such an impatient Gaze, and eager Expectation, that you almost imbib'd the Sentiment with your Eye, before the Ear could reach it.

As *Betterton* is the Centre to which all my Observations upon Action tend, you will give me leave, under his Character, to enlarge upon that Head. In the just Delivery of Poet-
 1 tical

tical Numbers, particularly where the Sentiments are pathetick, it is scarce credible, upon how minute an Article of Sound depends their greatest Beauty or Inaffection. The Voice of a Singer is not more strictly ty'd to Time and Tune, than that of an Actor in Theatrical Elocution: The least Syllable too long, or too slightly dwelt upon in a Period, depreciates it to nothing; which very Syllable, if rightly touch'd, shall, like the heightening Stroke of Light from a Master's Pencil, give Life and Spirit to the whole. I never heard a Line in Tragedy come from *Betterton*, wherein my Judgment, my Ear, and my Imagination, were not fully satisfy'd; which, since his Time, I cannot equally say of any one Actor whatsoever: Not but it is possible to be much his Inferior, with great Excellencies; which I shall observe in another Place. Had it been practicable to have ty'd down the clattering Hands of all the ill judges who were commonly the Majority of an Audience, to what amazing Perfection might the *Englisk* Theatre have arrived, with so just an Actor as *Betterton* at the Head of it! If what was Truth only, could have been applauded, how many noisy Actors had shook their Plumes with shame, who, from the injudicious Approbation of the Multitude, have bawl'd and strutted in the place of Merit? If therefore the bare speaking Voice has such Allurements in it, how much less ought we to wonder, however we may lament, that the sweeter Notes of Vocal Musick should so have captivated even the
 politer

politer World, into an Apostacy from Sense, to an Idolatry of Sound. Let us enquire from whence this Enchantment rises. I am afraid it may be too naturally accounted for: For when we complain, that the finest Musick, purchas'd at such vast Expence, is so often thrown away upon the most miserable Poetry, we seem not to consider, that when the Movement of the Air, and Tone of the Voice, are exquisitely harmonious, tho' we regard not one *Word* of what we hear, yet the Power of the Melody is so busy in the Heart, that we naturally annex Ideas to it of our own Creation, and, in some sort, become ourselves the Poet to the Composer; and what Poet is so dull as not to be charm'd with the Child of his own Fancy? So that there is even a kind of Language in agreeable Sounds, which, like the Aspect of Beauty, without Words, speaks and plays with the Imagination. While this Taste therefore is so naturally prevalent, I doubt, to propose Remedies for it, were but giving Laws to the Winds, or Advice to Inamorato's: And however gravely we may assert, that Profit ought always to be inseparable from the Delight of the Theatre; nay, admitting that the Pleasure would be heighten'd by the uniting them; yet, while Instruction is so little the Concern of the Auditor, how can we hope that so choice a Commodity will come to a Market where there is so seldom a Demand for it?

It





*Præcibili D^{no} D^{no} EDUARDO Comiti OXONIAE. &c. ad Archetypū Museo HARLEYANO aservatum
Quā par est Observantiā D. D. Vertue Sculpt^r.*

It is not to the Actor therefore, but to the vitiated and low Taste of the Spectator, that the Corruptions of the Stage (of what kind soever) have been owing. If the Publick, by whom they must live, had Spirit enough to discountenance, and declare against all the Trash and Fopperies they have been so frequently fond of, both the Actors, and the Authors, to the best of their Power, must naturally have serv'd their daily Table, with sound and wholesome Diet.—But I have not yet done with my Article of Elocution.

As we have sometimes great Composers of Musick, who cannot sing, we have as frequently great Writers that cannot read; and though, without the nicest Ear, no Man can be Master of Poetical Numbers, yet the best Ear in the World will not always enable him to pronounce them. Of this Truth, *Dryden*, our first great Master of Verse and Harmony, was a strong Instance: When he brought his Play of *Amphytrion* to the Stage, I heard him give it his first Reading to the Actors, in which, though it is true, he deliver'd the plain Sense of every Period, yet the whole was in so cold, so flat, and unaffecting a manner, that I am afraid of not being believ'd, when I affirm it.

On the contrary, *Lee*, far his Inferior in Poetry, was so pathetick a Reader of his own Scenes, that I have been inform'd by an Actor, who was present, that while *Lee* was reading to Major *Mobun* at a Rehearsal, *Mobun*,

bun, in the Warmth of his Admiration, threw down his Part, and said, Unless I were able to *play* it, as well as you *read* it, to what purpose should I undertake it? And yet this very Author, whose Elocution raised such Admiration in so capital an Actor, when he attempted to be an Actor himself, soon quitted the Stage, in an honest Despair of ever making any profitable Figure there. From all this I would infer, That let our Conception of what we are to speak be ever so just, and the Ear ever so true, yet, when we are to deliver it to an Audience (I will leave Fear out of the question) there must go along with the whole, a natural Freedom, and becoming Grace, which is easier to conceive than describe: For without this inexpressible Somewhat, the Performance will come out oddly disguis'd, or somewhere defectively, unsurprizing to the Hearer. Of this Defect too, I will give you yet a stranger Instance, which you will allow Fear could not be the Occasion of: If you remember *East-court*, you must have known that he was long enough upon the Stage, not to be under the least Restraint from Fear, in his Performance: This Man was so amazing and extraordinary a Mimick, that no Man or Woman, from the Coquette to the Privy-Counsellor, ever mov'd or spoke before him, but he could carry their Voice, Look, Mien, and Motion, instantly into another Company: I have heard him make long Harangues, and form various Arguments, even in the manner of thinking, of
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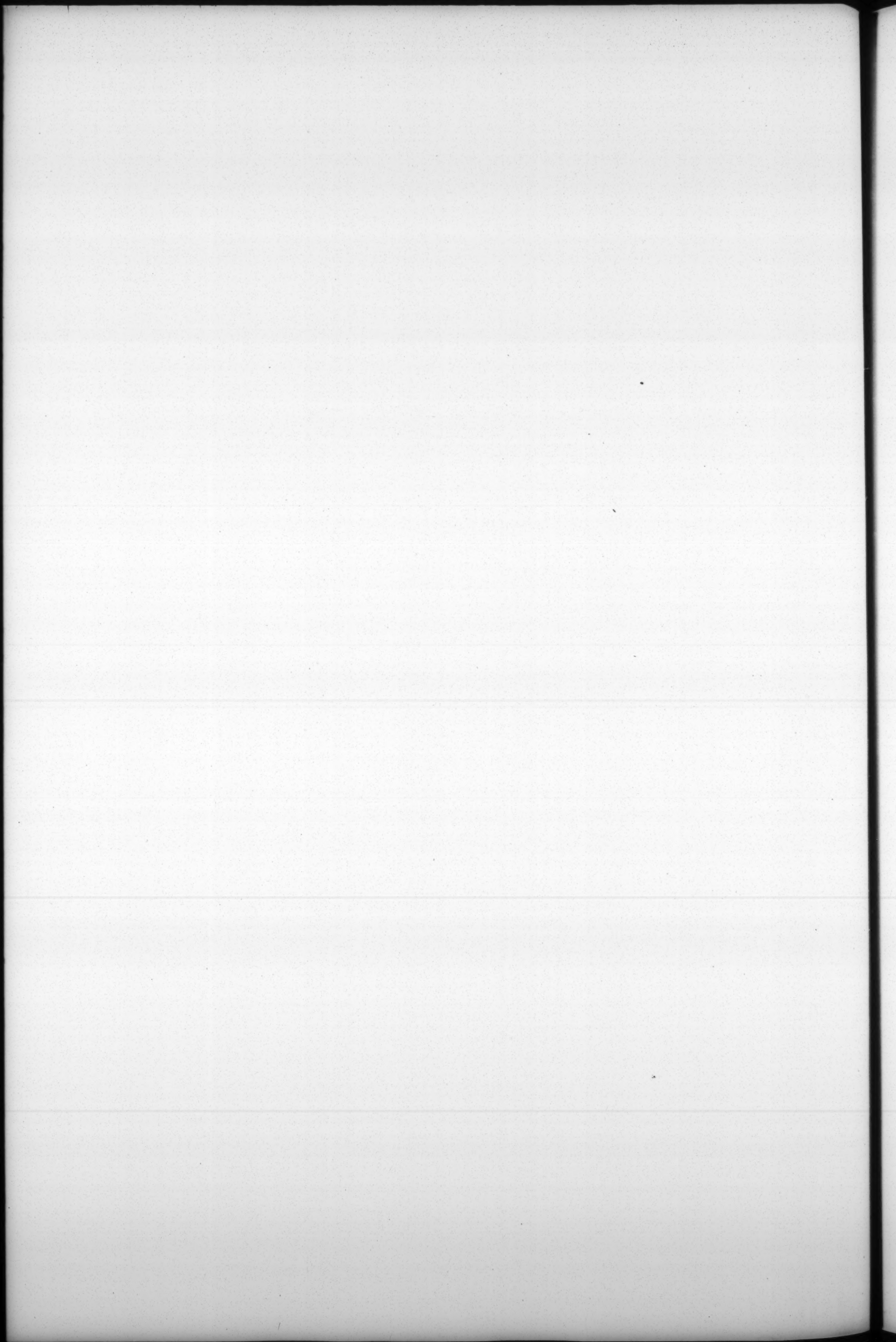
Harding Del.

Harding Sculp.

MICHAEL MOHUN.

from an Original Picture in the Collection of his Grace the Duke of Norfolk.

Engr. July 19. 1795. by E. & F. Harding Pall Mall.



an eminent Pleader at the Bar, with every the least Article and Singularity of his Utterance so perfectly imitated, that he was the very *alter ipse*, scarce to be distinguish'd from his Original. Yet more; I have seen, upon the Margin of the written Part of *Falstaff*, which he acted, his own Notes and Observations upon almost every Speech of it, describing the true Spirit of the Humour, and with what Tone of Voice; Look, and Gesture, each of them ought to be delivered. Yet in his Execution upon the Stage, he seem'd to have lost all those just Ideas he had form'd of it, and almost thro' the Character, labour'd under a heavy Load of Flatness: In a word, with all his Skill in Mimickry, and Knowledge of what ought to be done, he never, upon the Stage, could bring it truly into Practice, but was upon the whole, a languid, unaffecting Actor. After I have shewn you so many necessary Qualifications, not one of which can be spar'd in true Theatrical Elocution, and have at the same time prov'd, that with the Assistance of them all united, the whole may still come forth defective; what Talents shall we say will infallibly form an Actor? This, I confess, is one of Nature's Secrets, too deep for me to dive into; let us content ourselves therefore with affirming, That *Genius*, which Nature only gives, only can complete him. This *Genius* then was so strong in *Betterton*, that it shone out in every Speech and Motion of him. Yet Voice, and Person, are such necessary

Supports to it, that, by the Multitude, they have been preferr'd to *Genius* itself, or at least often mistaken for it. *Betterton* had a Voice of that kind, which gave more Spirit to Terror, than to the softer Passions; of more Strength than Melody. The Rage and Jealousy of *Othello*, became him better than the Sighs and Tenderness of *Castlio*: For though in *Castlio* he only excell'd others, in *Othello* he excell'd himself; which you will easily believe, when you consider, that in spite of his Complexion, *Othello* has more natural Beauties than the best Actor can find in all the Magazine of Poetry, to animate his Power, and delight his Judgment with.

The Person of this excellent Actor was suitable to his Voice, more manly than sweet, not exceeding the middle Stature, inclining to the corpulent; of a serious and penetrating Aspect; his Limbs nearer the athletick than the delicate Proportion; yet however form'd, there arose from the Harmony of the whole a commanding Mien of Majesty, which the fairer-fac'd, or (as *Shakespeare* calls 'em) the *curled* Darlings of his Time, ever wanted something to be equal Masters of. There was some Years ago, to be had, almost in every Print-shop, a *Metzotinto*, from *Kneller*, extremely like him.

In all I have said of *Betterton*, I confine myself to the Time of his Strength, and highest Power in Action, that you may make Allowances from what he was able to execute at
Fifty,



M^r Thomas Betterton
Totus Mundus Agit Histrionem

After pinx.

E. Cooper Exc.

R. Williams sc.

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Fifty,

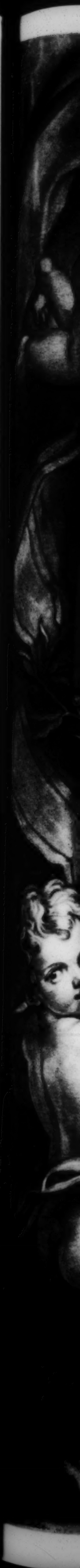
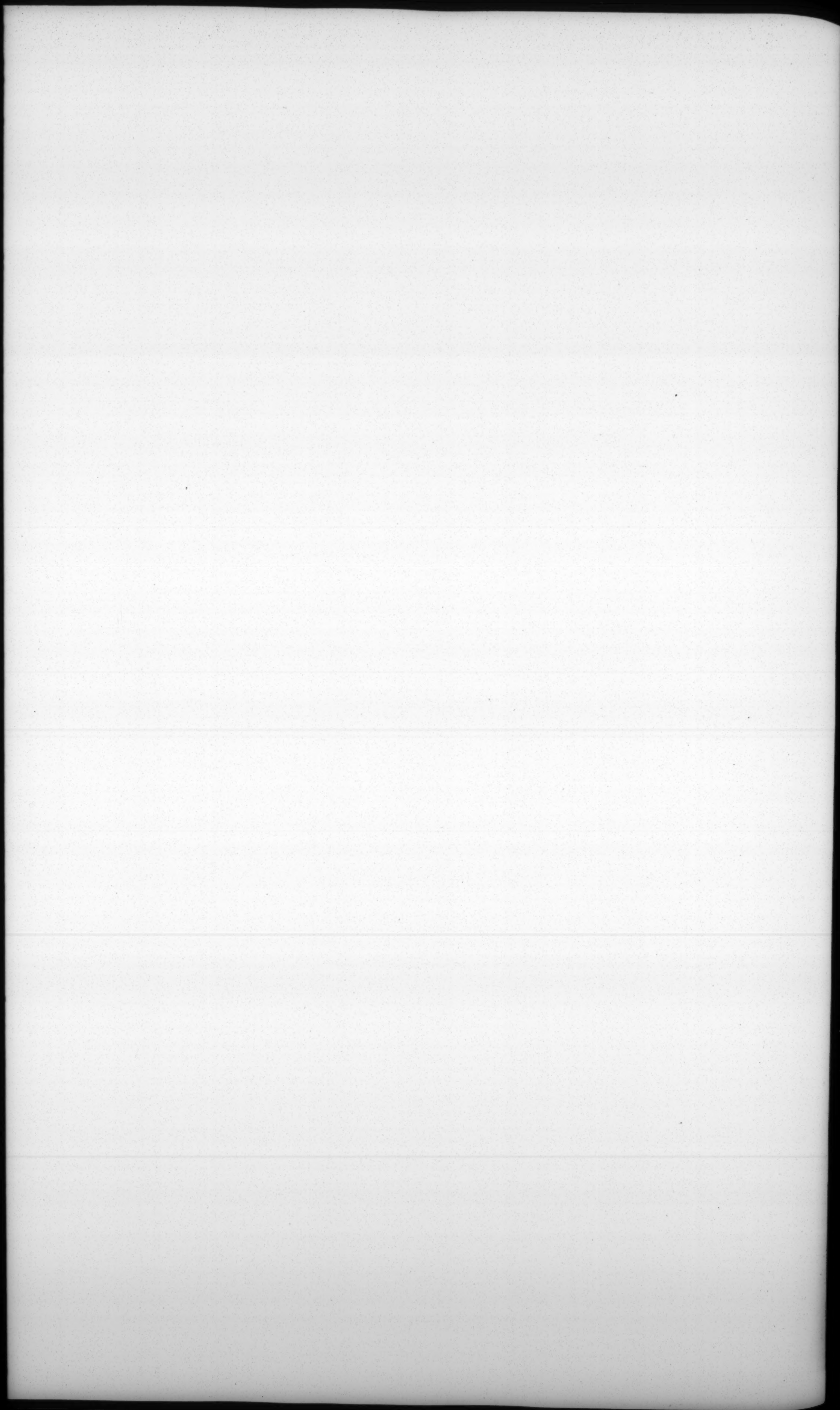


Mr. Thomas Betterton
Totus Mundus Agit Histrionem

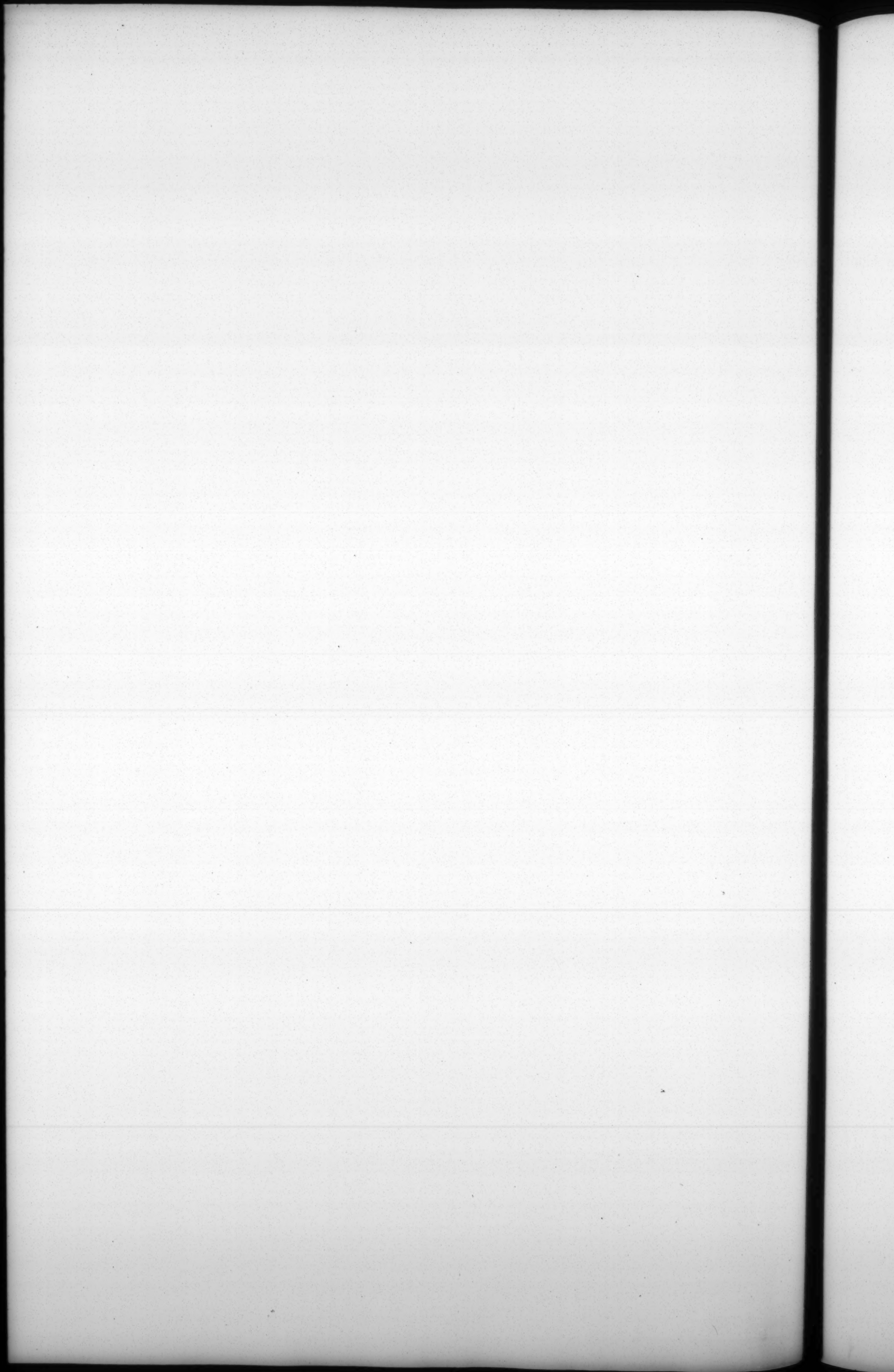
per pinx.

E. Cooper Ex.

R. Williams sc.







Fifty, to what you might have seen of him at past Seventy; for tho' to the last he was without his Equal, he might not then be equal to his former Self; yet so far was he from being ever overtaken, that for many Years after his Decease, I seldom saw any of his Parts, in *Shakspear*, supply'd by others, but it drew from me the Lamentation of *Ophelia* upon *Hamlet's* being unlike, what she had seen him.

——— *Al! woe is me!*
T'have seen, what I have seen, see what I see!

The last Part this great Master of his Profession acted, was *Melantius* in the *Maid's Tragedy*, for his own Benefit; when being suddenly seiz'd by the Gout, he submitted, by extraordinary Applications, to have his Foot so far reliev'd, that he might be able to walk on the Stage, in a Slipper, rather than wholly disappoint his Auditors. He was observ'd that Day to have exerted a more than ordinary Spirit, and met with suitable Applause; but the unhappy Consequence of tampering with his Distemper was, that it flew into his Head, and kill'd him in three Days, (I think) in the seventy-fourth Year of his Age.

I once thought to have fill'd up my Work with a select Dissertation upon Theatrical Action, but I find, by the Digressions I have been tempted to make in this Account of *Betterton*, that all I can say upon that Head, will naturally fall in, and possibly be less tedious, if dis-

pers'd among the various Characters of the particular Actors, I have promis'd to treat of; I shall therefore make use of those several Vehicles, which you will find waiting in the next Chapter, to carry you thro' the rest of the Journey, at your Leisure.



CHAP. V.

The Theatrical Characters of the Principal Actors, in the Year 1690, continu'd.

A few Words to Critical Auditors.



HO, as I have before observ'd, Women were not admitted to the Stage, 'till the Return of King Charles, yet it could not be so suddenly supply'd with them, but that there was still a Necessity, for some time, to put the handsomest young Men into Petticoats; which *Kynaston* was then said to have worn, with Success; particularly in the Part of *Evadne*, in the *Maid's Tragedy*, which I have heard him speak of; and which calls to my Mind a ridiculous Distress that arose from these sort of Shifts which the Stage was then put to.— The King coming a little before his usual time to a Tragedy, found the Actors not ready to begin, when his Majesty not chusing to have as much Patience as his good Subjects, sent to them,



Charles II. King of England.

NATUS 1630. OBIT 1685.

Engraved by Charles Turner.



them, to know the Meaning of it; upon which the Master of the Company came to the Box, and rightly judging, that the best Excuse for their Default, would be the true one, fairly told his Majesty, that the Queen was not *shav'd* yet: The King, whose good Humour lov'd to laugh at a Jest, as well as to make one, accepted the Excuse, which serv'd to divert him, till the male Queen cou'd be effeminated. In a word, *Kynaston*, at that time was so beautiful a Youth, that the Ladies of Quality prided themselves in taking him with them in their Coaches, to *Hyde-Park*, in his Theatrical Habit, after the Play; which in those Days they might have sufficient time to do, because Plays then, were us'd to begin at four a-Clock: The Hour that People of the same Rank, are now going to Dinner.—Of this Truth, I had the Curiosity to enquire, and had it confirm'd from his own Mouth, in his advanc'd Age: And indeed, to the last of him, his Handsomeness was very little abated; even at past Sixty, his Teeth were all sound, white, and even, as one would wish to see, in a reigning Toast of Twenty. He had something of a formal Gravity in his Mien, which was attributed to the stately Step he had been so early confin'd to, in a female Decency. But even that, in Characters of Superiority had its proper Graces; it misbecame him not in the Part of *Leon*, in *Fletcher's Rule a Wife, &c.* which he executed with a determin'd Manliness, and honest Authority, well worth the


best Actor's Imitation. He had a piercing Eye, and in Characters of heroick Life, a quick imperious Vivacity, in his Tone of Voice, that painted the Tyrant truly terrible. There were two Plays of *Dryden* in which he shone, with uncommon Lustre; in *Aurongo-Zebe* he play'd *Marat*, and in *Don Sebastian*, *Muley Meloch*; in both these Parts, he had a fierce, Lion-like Majesty in his Port and Utterance, that gave the Spectator a kind of trembling Admiration!

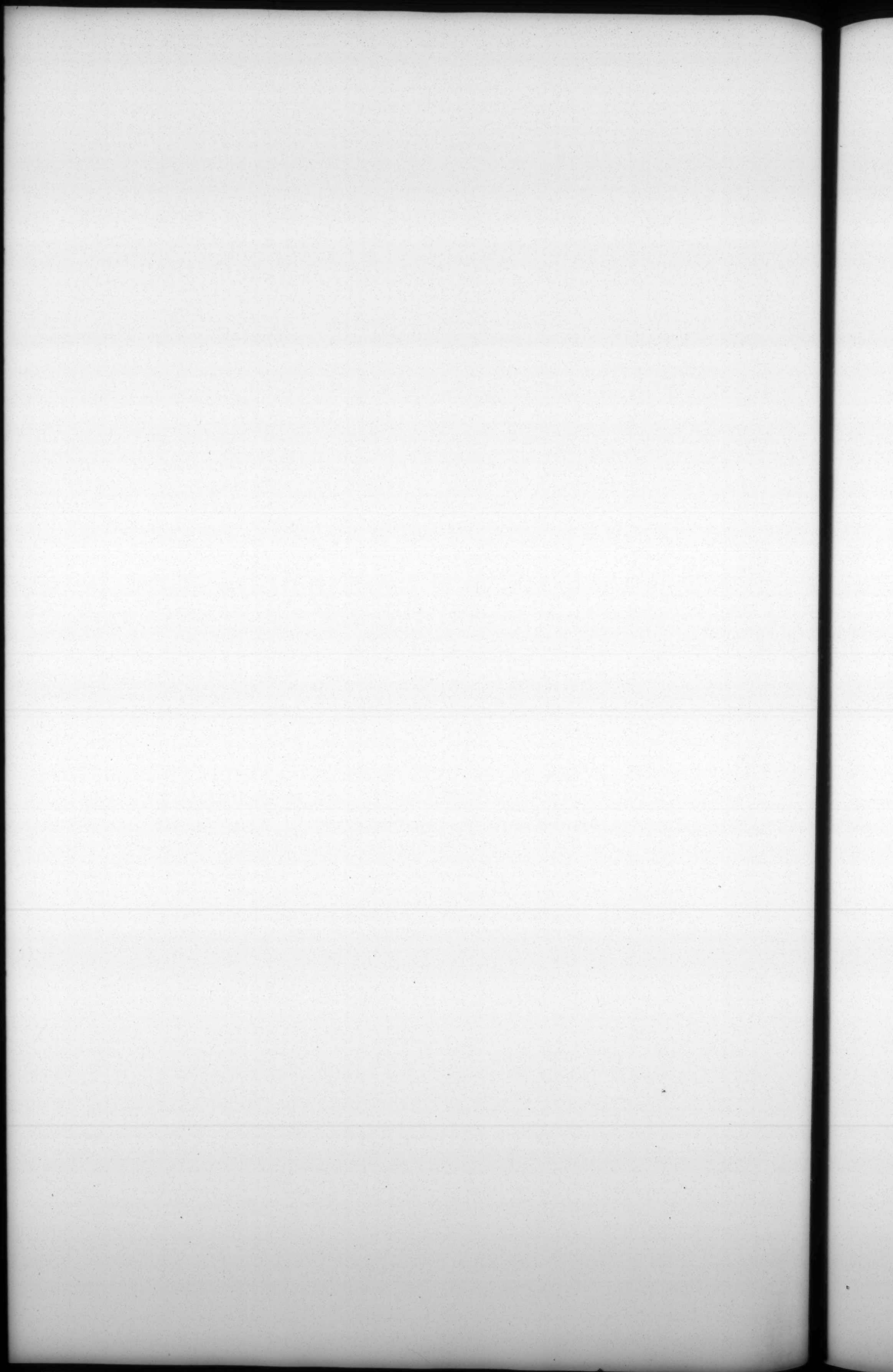
Here I cannot help observing upon a modest Mistake, which I thought the late Mr. *Booth* committed in his acting the Part of *Marat*: There are in this fierce Character so many Sentiments of avow'd Barbarity, Insolence, and Vain-glory, that they blaze even to a ludicrous Lustre, and doubtless the Poet intended those to make his Spectators laugh, while they admir'd them; but *Booth* thought it depreciated the Dignity of Tragedy to raise a smile, in any part of it, and therefore cover'd these kind of Sentiments with a scrupulous Coldness, and unmov'd Delivery, as if he had fear'd the Audience might take too familiar a notice of them. In Mr. *Addison's Cato*, *Syphax* has some Sentiments of near the same nature, which I ventur'd to speak, as I imagin'd *Kynaston* would have done, had he been then living to have stood in the same Character. Mr. *Addison*, who had something of Mr. *Booth's* Diffidence, at the Rehearsal of his Play, after it was acted, came into my Opinion,



G. Kneller Bart Pinxt

J. Faber scilicet 1733

Joseph  Addison Esq. &c.



nion, and own'd, that even Tragedy, on such particular Occasions, might admit of a *Laugh of Approbation*. In *Shakespear* Instances of them are frequent, as in *Macbeth*, *Hotspur*, *Richard the Third*, and *Henry the Eighth*, all which Characters, tho' of a tragical Cast, have sometimes familiar Strokes in them, so highly natural to each particular Disposition, that it is impossible not to be transported into an honest Laughier at them: And these are those happy Liberties, which tho' few Authors are qualify'd to take, yet when justly taken, may challenge a Place among their greatest Beauties. Now whether *Dryden* in his *Morat*, *feliciter Audet*, — or may be allow'd the Happiness of having hit his Mark, seems not necessary to be determin'd by the Actor; whose Business, sure, is to make the best of his Author's Intention, as in this Part *Kynaston* did, doubtless not without *Dryden's* Approbation. For these Reasons then, I thought my good Friend, Mr. *Booth* (who certainly had many Excellencies) carried his Reverence for the Buskin too far, in not following the bold Flights of the Author with that Wantonness of Spirit which the Nature of those Sentiments demanded: For Example! *Morat* having a criminal Passion for *Indamora*, promises, at her Request, for one Day, to spare the Life of her Lover *Aurence-Zebe*: But not chusing to make known the real Motive of his Mercy, when *Nourmahal* says to him,

'Twill not be safe to let him live an Hour !

Morat silences her with this heroical *Rhodomontade*,

I'll do't, to shew my Arbitrary Power.

Risum tenetis? It was impossible not to laugh, and reasonably too, when this Line came out of the Mouth of *Kynaston*, with the stern, and haughty Look that attended it. But above this tyrannical, tumid Superiority of Character, there is a grave, and rational Majesty in *Shakspeare's Harry the Fourth*, which tho' not so glaring to the vulgar Eye, requires thrice the skill, and Grace to become, and support. Of this real Majesty *Kynaston* was entirely Master; here every Sentiment came from him, as if it had been his own, as if he had himself, that instant, conceiv'd it, as if he had lost the Player, and were the real King he perforated! a Perfection so rarely found, that very often in Actors of good Repute, a certain Vacancy of Look, Inanity of Voice, or superfluous Gesture, shall unmask the Man, to the judicious Spectator; who from the least of those Errors plainly sees, the whole but a Lesson given him, to be got by Heart, from some great Author, whose Sense is deeper than the Repeater's Understanding. This true Majesty *Kynaston* had so entire a Command of, that when he whisper'd the following plain Line to *Hotspur*,

Send us your Prisoners, or you'll hear of it!

I

He

He convey'd a more terrible Menace in it than the loudest Intemperance of Voice could swell to. But let the bold Imitator beware, for without the Look, and just Elocution that waited on it, an Attempt of the same nature may fall to nothing.

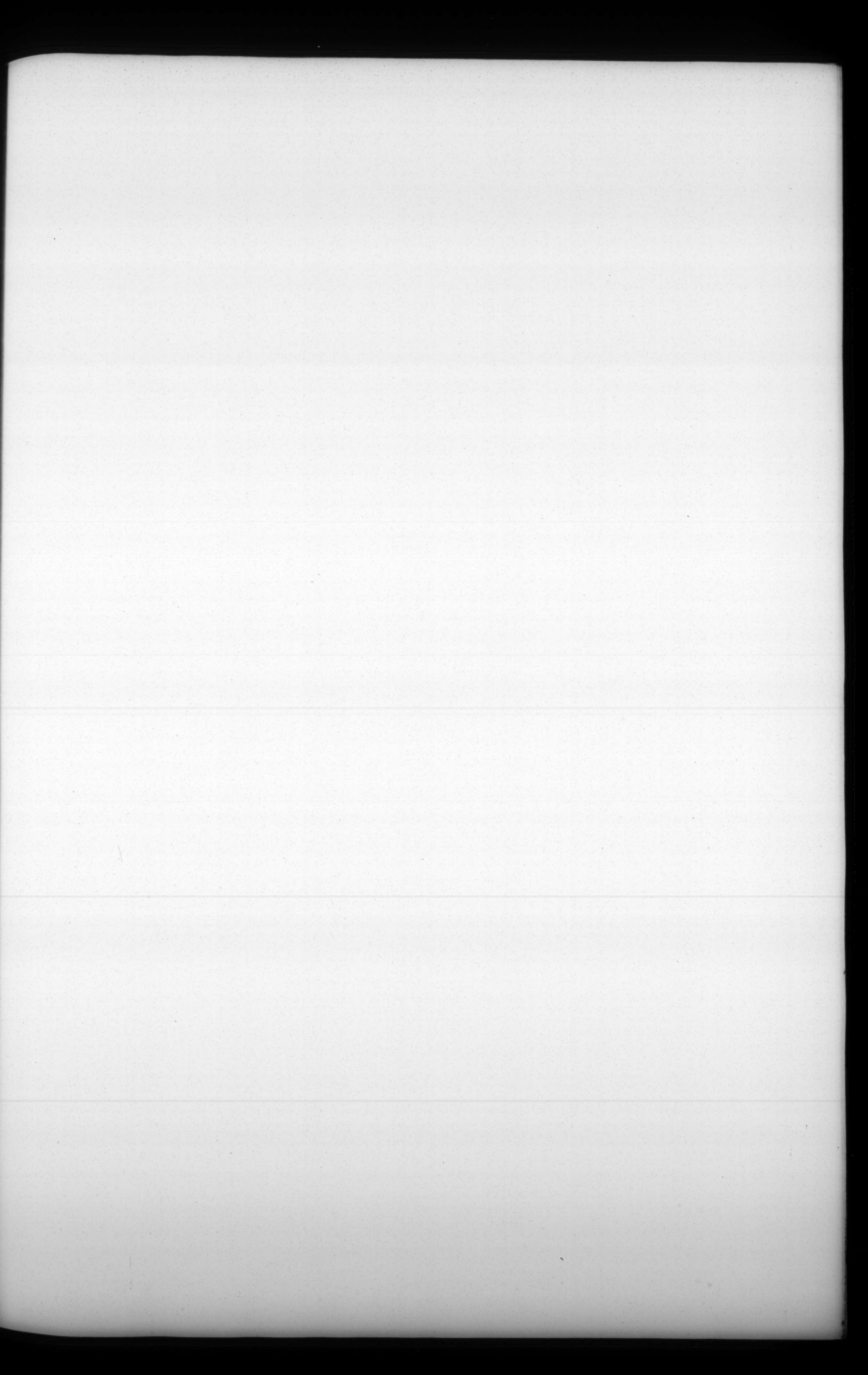
But the Dignity of this Character appear'd in *Kynaston* still more shining, in the private Scene between the King, and Prince his Son: There you saw Majesty, in that sort of Grief, which only Majesty could feel! there the paternal Concern, for the Errors of the Son, made the Monarch more rever'd, and dreaded: His Reproaches so just, yet so unmix'd with Anger (and therefore the more piercing) opening as it were the Arms of Nature, with a secret Wish, that filial Duty, and Penitence awak'd, might fall into them with Grace and Honour. In this affecting Scene I thought *Kynaston* shew'd his most masterly Strokes of Nature; expressing all the various Motions of the Heart, with the same Force, Dignity, and Feeling they are written; adding to the whole, that peculiar, and becoming Grace, which the best Writer cannot inspire into any Actor, that is not born with it. What made the Merit of this Actor, and that of *Batterton* more surprising, was, that though they both observ'd the Rules of Truth, and Nature, they were each as different in their manner of acting, as in their personal Form, and Features. But *Kynaston* staid too long upon the Stage, till his Memory and Spirit began to fail him. I shall

shall not therefore say any thing of his Imperfections, which, at that time, were visibly not his own, but the Effects of decaying Nature.

Monfort, a younger Man by twenty Years, and at this time in his highest Reputation, was an Actor of a very different Style: Of Person he was tall, well made, fair, and of an agreeable Aspect: His Voice clear, full, and melodious: In Tragedy he was the most affecting Lover within my Memory. His Addresses had a resistless Recommendation from the very Tone of his Voice, which gave his Words such Softness, that, as *Dryden* says,

—*Like Flakes of feather'd Snow,
They melted as they fell!*

All this he particularly verify'd in that Scene of *Alexander*, where the Heroe throws himself at the Feet of *Statira* for Pardon of his past Infidelities. There we saw the Great, the Tender, the Penitent, the Despairing, the Transported, and the Amiable, in the highest Perfection. In Comedy, he gave the truest Life to what we call the *Fine Gentleman*; his Spirit shone the brighter for being polish'd with Decency: In Scenes of Gaiety, he never broke into the Regard, that was due to the Presence of equal, or superior Characters, tho' inferior Actors play'd them; he fill'd the Stage, not by elbowing, and crossing it before others, or disconcerting their Action, but by surpassing them, in true and masterly Touches
of





*Serenissima Maria D. G. Angliæ
Scotiæ Franciæ & Hiberniæ Regina &c.*

J. Kneller Eques ad vivum pinx.

Et ab illa sola Originali (dum regnavit) depicta. I. Smith fecit & excudit.

of Nature. He never laugh'd at his own Jest, unless the Point of his Raillery upon another requir'd it.—He had a particular Talent, in giving Life to *bons Mots* and *Repartees*: The Wit of the Poet seem'd always to come from him *extempore*, and sharpen'd into more Wit, from his brilliant manner of delivering it; he had himself a good Share of it, or what is equal to it, so lively a Pleasantness of Humour, that when either of these fell into his Hands upon the Stage, he wantoned with them, to the highest Delight of his Auditors. The *agreeable* was so natural to him, that even in that dissolute Character of the *Rover* he seem'd to wash off the Guilt from Vice, and gave it Charms and Merit. For tho' it may be a Reproach to the Poet, to draw such Characters, not only unpunish'd, but rewarded; the Actor may still be allow'd his due Praise in his excellent Performance. And this is a Distinction which, when this Comedy was acted at *Whitehall*, King *William's* Queen *Mary* was pleas'd to make in favour of *Monfort*, notwithstanding her Disapprobation of the Play.

He had besides all this, a Variety in his Genius, which few capital Actors have shewn, or perhaps have thought it any Addition to their Merit to arrive at; he could entirely change himself; could at once throw off the Man of Sense, for the brisk, vain, rude, and lively Coxcomb, the false, flashy Pretender to Wit, and the Dupe of his own Sufficiency:

Of

Of this he gave a delightful Instance in the Character of *Sparkish* in *Wycherly's Country Wife*. In that of *Sir Courtly Nice* his Excellence was still greater: There his whole Man, Voice, Mein, and Gesture, was no longer *Monfort*, but another Person. There, the insipid, soft Civility, the elegant, and formal Mien; the drawling Delicacy of Voice, the stately Flatness of his Address, and the empty Eminence of his Attitudes were so nicely observ'd and guarded by him, that had he not been an intire Master of Nature, had he not kept his Judgment, as it were, a Centinel upon himself, not to admit the least Likeness of what he us'd to be, to enter into any Part of his Performance, he could not possibly have so completely finish'd it. If, some Years after the Death of *Monfort*, I myself had any Success, in either of these Characters, I must pay the Debt, I owe to his Memory, in confessing the Advantages I receiv'd from the just Idea, and strong Impression he had given me, from his acting them. Had he been remember'd, when I first attempted them, my Defects would have been more easily discover'd, and consequently my favourable Reception in them, must have been very much, and justly abated. If it could be remembred how much he had the Advantage of me, in Voice and Person, I could not, here, be suspected of an affected Modesty, or of over-valuing his Excellence: For he sung a clear Counter-tenour, and had a melodious, warbling Throat, which could not
but

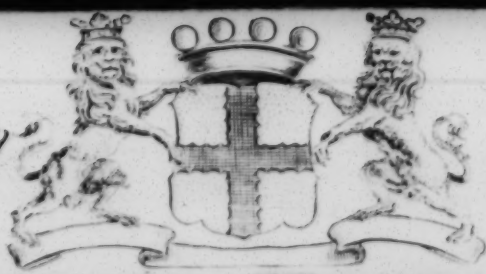




G. Kneller Pinx. 1707.

J. Pater scul. 1732.

Charles Mohun



Lord Mohun.

but set off the last Scene of *Sir Courtly* with an uncommon Happiness; which I, alas! could only struggle thro', with the faint Excuses, and real Confidence of a fine Singer, under the Imperfection of a feign'd and screaming Treble, which at best could only shew you what I would have done, had Nature been more favourable to me.

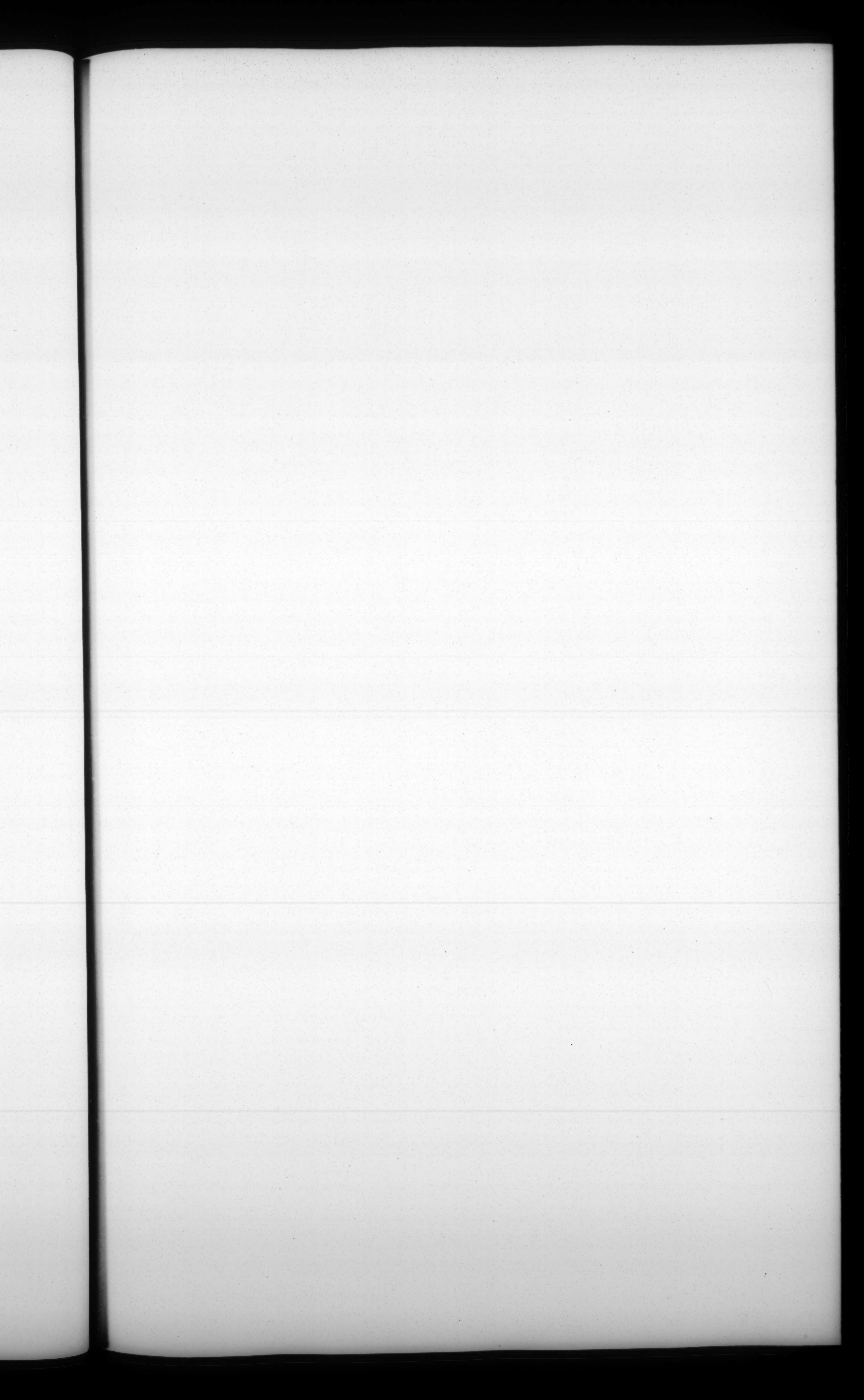
This excellent Actor was cut off by a tragical Death, in the 33d Year of his Age, generally lamented by his Friends, and all Lovers of the Theatre. The particular Accidents that attended his Fall, are to be found at large in the Trial of the Lord *Moban*, printed among those of the State, in *Folio*.

Sandford might properly be term'd the *Spagnolet* of the Theatre, an excellent Actor in disagreeable Characters: For as the chief Pieces of that famous Painter were of human Nature in Pain and Agony; so *Sandford*, upon the Stage, was generally as flagitious as a *Creon*, a *Maligni*, an *Ingro*, or a *Machiavell*, could make him. The Painter, 'tis true, from the Fire of his Genius might think the quiet Objects of Nature too tame for his Pencil, and therefore chose to indulge it in its full Power, upon those of Violence and Horror: But poor *Sandford* was not the Stage-Villain by Choice, but from Necessity; for having a low and crooked Person, such bodily Defects were too strong to be admitted into great, or amiable Characters; so that whenever, in any new or revived Play, there was a hateful or mischievous

vous

vous Person, *Sandford* was sure to have no Competitor for it: Nor indeed (as we are not to suppose a Villain, or Traitor can be shewn for our Imitation, or not for our Abhorrence) can it be doubted, but the less comely the Actor's Person, the fitter he may be to perform them. The Spectator too, by not being misled by a tempting Form, may be less inclin'd to excuse the wicked or immoral Views or Sentiments of them, And though the hard Fate of an *Oedipus*, might naturally give the Humanity of an Audience thrice the Pleasure that could arise from the wilful Wickedness of the best acted *Creon*; yet who could say that *Sandford*, in such a Part, was not Master of as true and just Action, as the best Tragedian could be, whose happier Person had recommended him to the virtuous Heroe, or any other more pleasing Favourite of the Imagination? In this disadvantageous Light, then, stood *Sandford*, as an Actor; admir'd by the Judicious, while the Crowd only prais'd him by their Prejudice. And so unusual had it been to see *Sandford* an innocent Man in a Play, that whenever he was so, the Spectators would hardly give him credit in so gross an Improbability. Let me give you an odd Instance of it, which I heard *Monfort* say was a real Fact. A new Play (the Name of it I have forgot) was brought upon the Stage, wherein *Sandford* happen'd to perform the Part of an honest Statesman: The Pit, after they had sat three or four Acts, in a quiet Expectation, that the well-dissembled

Honesty





Titus Oates. D.D. Anagrama. Testis Ouat.
J. Ho. Hauker pinxit. R. Tompson excudit.

COLLEY CIBBER. III

Honesty of *Sandford* (for such of course they concluded it) would soon be discover'd, or at least, from its Security, involve the Actors in the Play, in some surprizing Distress or Confusion, which might raise, and animate the Scenes to come; when, at last, finding no such matter, but that the Catastrophe had taken quite another Turn, and that *Sandford* was really an honest Man to the end of the Play, they fairly damn'd it, as if the Author had impos'd upon them the most frontless or incredible Absurdity.

It is not improbable, but that from *Sandford's* so masterly personating Characters of Guilt, the inferior Actors might think his Success chiefly owing to the Defects of his Person; and from thence might take occasion, whenever they appear'd as Bravo's, or Murderers, to make themselves as frightful and as inhuman Figures, as possible. In King *Charles's* time, this low Skill was carry'd to such an Extravagance, that the King himself, who was black-brow'd, and of a swarthy Complexion, pass'd a pleasant Remark, upon his observing the grim Looks of the Murderers in *Macbeth*; when, turning to his People, in the Box about him, *Pray, what is the Meaning*, said he, *t'at we never see a Rogue in a Play, but, Godsfish, they always clap him on a black Perriwig? when, it is well known, one of the greatest Rogues in England always wears a fair one?* Now, whether or no Dr. Oates, at that time, wore his own Hair,



Titus Oates. D-D. Anagrama. Testis. Ouat.
J. Ho. Hauker pinxit. *R. Tompson excudit.*

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I cannot be positive: Or, if his Majesty pointed at some greater Man, then out of Power, I leave those to guess at him, who, may yet, remember the changing Complexion of his Ministers. This Story I had from *Betterton*, who was a Man of Veracity: And, I confess, I should have thought the King's Observation a very just one, though he himself had been fair as *Adonis*. Nor can I, in this Question, help voting with the Court; for were it not too gross a Weakness to employ, in wicked Purposes, Men, whose very suspected Looks might be enough to betray them? Or are we to suppose it unnatural, that a Murder should be thoroughly committed out of an old red Coat, and a black Perriwig?

For my own part, I profess myself to have been an Admirer of *Sandford*, and have often lamented, that his masterly Performance could not be rewarded with that Applause, which I saw much inferior Actors met with, merely because they stood in more laudable Characters. For, tho' it may be a Merit in an Audience, to applaud Sentiments of Virtue and Honour; yet there seems to be an equal Justice, that no Distinction should be made, as to the Excellence of an Actor, whether in a good or evil Character; since neither the Vice, nor the Virtue of it, is his own, but given him by the Poet: Therefore, why is not the Actor who shines in either, equally commendable?—No, Sir; this may be Reason, but that is not always a Rule with us; the Spectator

tator will tell you, that when Virtue is applauded, he gives part of it to himself; because his Applause at the same time, lets others about him see, that he himself admires it. But when a wicked Action is going forward; when an *Iago* is meditating Revenge, and Mischief; tho' Art and Nature may be equally strong in the Actor, the Spectator is shy of his Applause, lest he should, in some sort, be look'd upon as an Aider or an Abettor of the Wickedness in view; and therefore rather chuses to rob the Actor of the Praise he may merit, than give it him in a Character, which he would have you see his Silence modestly discourages. From the same fond Principle, many Actors have made it a Point to be seen in Parts sometimes, even flatly written, only because they stood in the favourable Light of Honour and Virtue.

I have formerly known an Actress carry this Theatrical Prudery to such a height, that she was, very near, keeping herself chaste by it: Her Fondness for Virtue on the Stage, she began to think, might persuade the World, that it had made an Impression on her private Life; and the Appearances of it actually went so far, that, in an Epilogue to an obscure Play, the Profits of which were given to her, and wherein she acted a Part of impregnable Chastity, she bespoke the Favour of the Ladies by a Protestation, that in Honour of their Goodness and Virtue, she would dedicate her unblemish'd Life to their Example. Part of this Vestal

I Vow,

Vow, I remember, was contain'd in the following Verse:

Study to live the Character I play.

But alas! how weak are the strongest Works of Art, when Nature besieges it? for though this good Creature so far held out her Distaste to Mankind, that they could never reduce her to marry any one of 'em; yet we must own she grew, like *Cæsar*, greater by her Fall! Her first heroick Motive, to a Surrender, was to save the Life of a Lover, who, in his Despair, had vow'd to destroy himself, with which Act of Mercy (in a jealous Dispute once, in my Hearing) she was provoked to reproach him in these very Words; *Villain! did not I save your Life?* The generous Lover, in return to that first tender Obligation, gave Life to her First-born, and that pious Offspring has, since, rais'd to her Memory, several innocent Grandchildren.

So that, as we see, it is not the Hood, that makes the Monk, nor the Veil the Vestal; I am apt to think, that if the personal Morals of an Actor, were to be weigh'd by his Appearance on the Stage, the Advantage and Favour (if any were due to either side) might rather incline to the Traitor, than the Heroe, to the *Sempronius*, than the *Cato*; or to the *Syphax*, than the *Juba*: Because no Man can naturally desire to cover his Honesty with a wicked Appearance; but an ill Man might possibly incline to cover his Guilt with the Appearance of

Virtue,

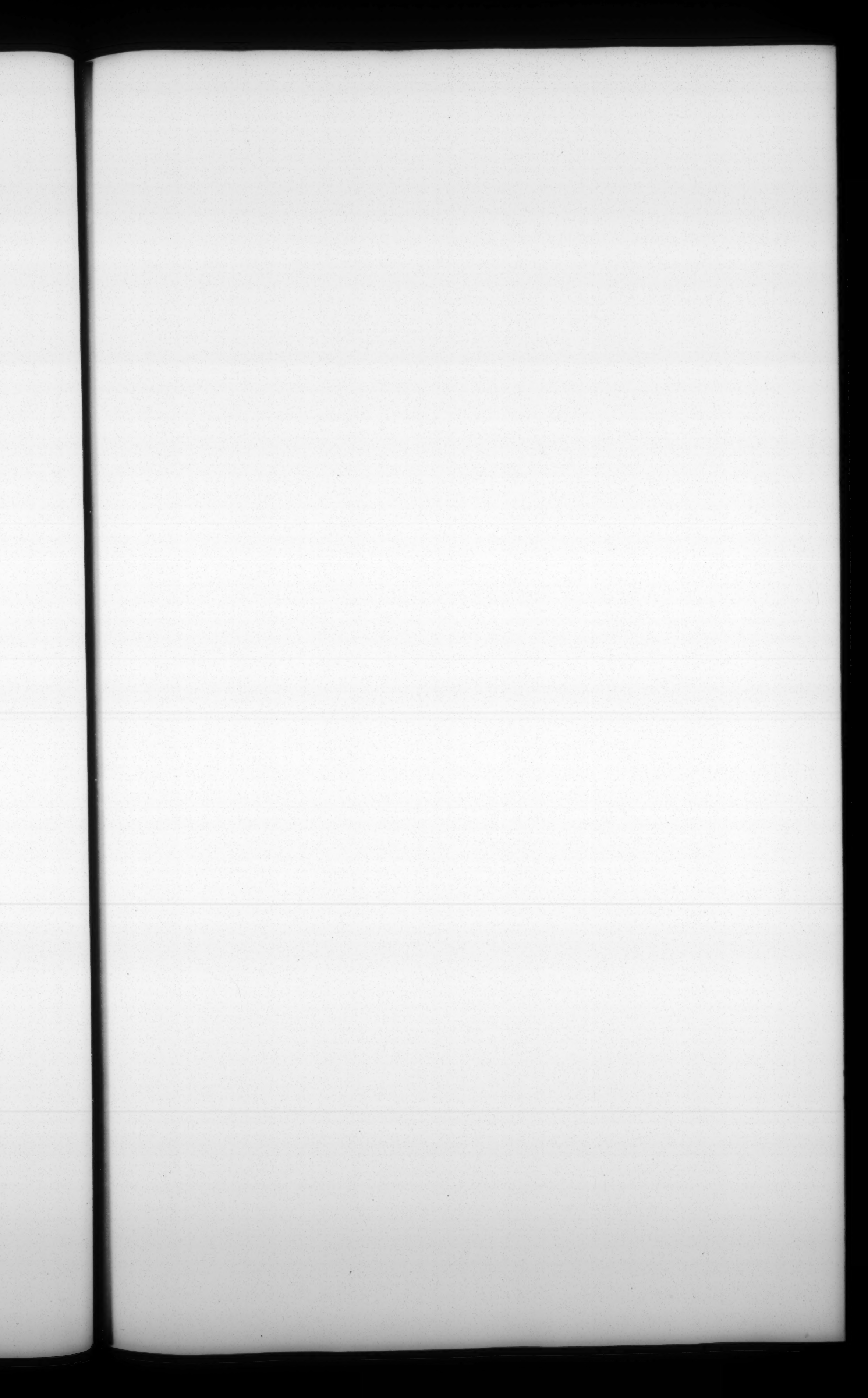
Virtue, which was the Case of the frail Fair One, now mentioned, But be this Question decided as it may, *Sandford* always appear'd to me the honeſter Man, in proportion to the Spirit wherewith he expoſed the wicked, and immoral Characters he acted: For had his Heart been unſound, or tainted with the leaſt Guilt of them, his Conſcience muſt, in ſpite of him, in any too near a Reſemblance of himſelf, have been a Check upon the Vivacity of his Action. *Sandford*, therefore, might be ſaid to have contributed his equal Share, with the foremoſt Actors, to the true and laudable Uſe of the Stage: And in this Light too, of being ſo frequently the Object of common Diſtaſte, we may honeſtly ſtile him a Theatrical Martyr, to Poetical Juſtice: For in making Vice odious, or Virtue amiable, where does the Merit differ? To hate the one, or love the other, are but leading Steps to the ſame Temple of Fame, tho' at different Portals.

This Actor, in his manner of Speaking, varied very much from thoſe I have already mentioned. His Voice had an acute and piercing Tone, which ſtruck every Syllable of his Words diſtinctly upon the Ear. He had likewiſe a peculiar Skill in his Look of marking out to an Audience whatever he judg'd worth their more than ordinary Notice. When he deliver'd a Command, he would ſometimes give it more Force, by ſeeming to ſlight the Ornament of Harmony. In *Dryden's* Plays of Rhime, he as little as poſſible glutted the Ear with the

Jingle of it, rather chusing, when the Sense would permit him, to lose it, than to value it.

Had *Sandford* liv'd in *Shakeſpear's* Time, I am confident his Judgment muſt have choſe him, above all other Actors, to have play'd his *Richard the Third*: I leave his Perſon out of the Queſtion, which, tho' naturally made for it, yet that would have been the leaſt Part of his Recommendation; *Sandford* had ſtronger Claims to it; he had ſometimes an uncouth Statelineſs in his Motion, a harſh and ſullen Pride of Speech, a meditating Brow, a ſtern Aſpect, occaſionally changing into an almoſt ludicrous Triumph over all Goodneſs and Virtue: From thence, falling into the moſt aſſwaſive Gentleneſs, and ſoothing Candour of a deſigning Heart. Theſe, I ſay, muſt have prefer'd him to it; theſe would have been Colours ſo eſſentially ſhining in that Character, that it will be no Diſpraiſe to that great Author, to ſay, *Sandford* muſt have ſhewn as many maſterly Strokes in it (had he ever acted it) as are viſible in the Writing it.

When I firſt brought *Richard the Third* (with ſuch Alterations as I thought not improper) to the Stage, *Sandford* was engaged in the Company then acting under King *William's* Licence in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*; otherwiſe you cannot but ſuppoſe my Intereſt muſt have offer'd him that Part. What encouraged me, therefore, to attempt it myſelf at the *Theatre-Royal*, was, that I imagined I knew how *Sandford* would have ſpoken every Line of it: If therefore, in





Sir John Vanbrugh.

G. Kneller S.R. Imp: et Mag. Brit. Barenol pinx.

Simon fecit.

Sold by J. Tonson in the Strand

any Part of it, I succeeded, let the Merit be given to him : And how far I succeeded in that Light, those only can be Judges who remember him. In order, therefore, to give you a nearer Idea of *Sandford*, you must give me leave (compell'd as I am to be vain) to tell you, that the late Sir *John Vanbrugh*, who was an Admirer of *Sandford*, after he had seen me act it, assur'd me, That he never knew any one Actor so particularly profit by another, as I had done by *Sandford* in *Richard the Third* : *You have*, said he, *his very Look, Gesture, Gait, Speech, and every Motion of him, and have borrow'd them all, only to serve you in that Character*. If therefore Sir *John Vanbrugh's* Observation was just, they who remember me in *Richard the Third*, may have a nearer Conception of *Sandford*, than from all the critical Account I can give of him.

I come now to those other Men Actors, who, at this time, were equally famous in the lower Life of Comedy. But I find myself more at a loss to give you them, in their true and proper Light, than those I have already set before you. Why the Tragedian warms us into Joy, or Admiration, or sets our Eyes on flow with Pity, we can easily explain to another's Apprehension : But it may sometimes puzzle the gravest Spectator to account for that familiar Violence of Laughter, that shall seize him, at some particular Strokes of a true Comedian. How then shall I describe what a better Judge might not be able to express ? The Rules to
please

please the Fancy cannot so easily be laid down, as those that ought to govern the Judgment. The Decency too, that must be observed in Tragedy, reduces, by the manner of speaking it, one Actor to be much more like another, than they can or need be supposed to be in Comedy: There the Laws of Action give them such free, and almost unlimited Liberties, to play and wanton with Nature, that the Voice, Look, and Gesture of a Comedian may be as various, as the Manners and Faces of the whole Mankind are different from one another. These are the Difficulties I lie under. Where I want Words, therefore, to describe what I may commend, I can only hope you will give credit to my Opinion: And this Credit I shall most stand in need of, when I tell you, that

Nokes was an Actor of a quite different Genius from any I have ever read, heard of, or seen, since or before his Time; and yet his general Excellence may be comprehended in one Article, *viz.* a plain and palpable Simplicity of Nature, which was so utterly his own, that he was often as unaccountably diverting in his common Speech, as on the Stage. I saw him once, giving an Account of some Table-talk, to another Actor behind the Scenes, which, a Man of Quality accidentally listening to, was so deceived by his Manner, that he ask'd him, if that was a new Play, he was rehearsing? It seems almost amazing, that this Simplicity, so easy to *Nokes*, should never be caught by any one of his Successors. *Leigh* and *Underbil* have

have been well copied, tho' not equall'd by others. But not all the mimical Skill of *Est-court* (fam'd as he was for it) tho' he had often seen *Nokes*, could scarce give us an Idea of him. After this perhaps it will be saying less of him, when I own, that though I have still the Sound of every Line he spoke, in my Ear, (which us'd not to be thought a bad one) yet I have often try'd, by myself, but in vain, to reach the least distant Likeness of the *Vis Comica* of *Nokes*. Though this may seem little to his Praise, it may be negatively saying a good deal to it, because I have never seen any one Actor, except himself, whom I could not, at least so far imitate, as to give you a more than tolerable Notion of his manner. But *Nokes* was so singular a Species, and was so form'd by Nature for the Stage, that I question if (beyond the trouble of getting Words by Heart) it ever cost him an Hour's Labour to arrive at that high Reputation he had, and deserved.

The Characters he particularly shone in, were Sir *Martin Marr-al*, *Gomez* in the *Spanish Friar*, Sir *Nicholas Cully* in *Love in a Tub*, *Barnaby Brittle* in the *Wanton Wife*, Sir *Davy Dunce* in the *Soldier's Fortune*, *Sofia* in *Amphytrion*, &c. &c. &c. To tell you how he acted them is beyond the reach of Criticism: But, to tell you what Effect his Action had upon the Spectator, is not impossible: This then is all you will expect from me, and from hence I must leave you to guess at him.

He scarce ever made his first Entrance in a Play, but he was received with an involuntary Applause, not of Hands only, for those may be, and have often been partially prostituted, and bespoken; but by a General Laughter, which the very Sight of him provoked, and Nature could not resist; yet the louder the Laugh the graver was his Look upon it; and sure, the ridiculous Solemnity of his Features were enough to have set a whole Bench of Bishops into a Titter, cou'd he have been honour'd (may it be no Offence to suppose it) with such grave and right reverend Auditors. In the ludicrous Distresses, which by the Laws of Comedy, Folly is often involv'd in; he sunk into such a Mixture of piteous Pusillanimity, and a Consternation so ruefully ridiculous and inconsolable, that when he had shook you, to a Fatigue of Laughter, it became a moot Point, whether you ought not to have pity'd him. When he debated any matter by himself, he would shut up his Mouth with a dumb studious Powt, and roll his full Eye into such a vacant Amazement, such a palpable Ignorance of what to think of it, that his silent Perplexity (which would sometimes hold him several Minutes) gave your Imagination as full Content, as the most absurd thing he could say upon it. In the Character of Sir *Martin Marrall*, who is always committing Blunders to the Prejudice of his own Interest, when he had brought himself to a Dilemma in his Affairs, by vainly proceeding upon his own Head,

and

and was afterwards afraid to look his governing Servant, and Counsellor in the Face; what a copious, and distressful Harangue have I seen him make with his Looks (while the House has been in one continued Roar, for several Minutes) before he could prevail with his Courage to speak a Word to him! Then might you have, at once, read in his Face *Vexation*—that his own Measures, which he had piqued himself upon, had fail'd. *Envy*—of his Servant's superior Wit. *Distress*—to retrieve, the Occasion he had lost. *Shame*—to confess his Folly: and yet a sullen Desire, to be reconciled and better advised, for the future! What Tragedy ever shew'd us such a Tumult of Passions, rising, at once, in one Bosom! or what buskin'd Heroe standing under the Load of them, could have more effectually, mov'd his Spectators, by the most pathetick Speech, than poor miserable *Nokes* did, by this silent Eloquence, and piteous Plight of his Features?

His Person was of the middle size, his Voice clear, and audible; his natural Countenance grave, and sober; but the Moment he spoke, the settled Seriousness of his Features was utterly discharg'd, and a dry, drolling, or laughing Levity took such full Possession of him, that I can only refer the Idea of him to your Imagination. In some of his low Characters, that became it, he had a shuffling Shamble in his Gait, with so contented an Ignorance in his Aspect, and an aukward Absurdity in his Gesture, that

that had you not known him, you could not have believ'd, that naturally he could have had a Grain of common Sense. In a Word, I am tempted to sum up the Character of *Nokes*, as a Comedian, in a Parodie of what *Shakespeare's Mark Antony* says of *Brutus* as a Hero.

*His Life was Laughter, and the Ludicrous
So mixt, in him, that Nature might stand up,
And say to all the World—This was an Actor.*

Leigh was of the mercurial kind, and though not so strict an Observer of Nature, yet never so wanton in his Performance, as to be wholly out of her Sight. In Humour, he lov'd to take a full Career, but was careful enough to stop short, when just upon the Precipice: He had great Variety, in his manner, and was famous in very different Characters: In the canting, grave, Hypocrisy of the *Spanish* Friar, he stretch the Veil of Piety so thinly over him, that in every Look, Word, and Motion, you saw a palpable, wicked Slyneſs shine through it—Here he kept his Vivacity demurely confin'd, till the pretended Duty of his Function demanded it; and then he exerted it, with a cholerick sacerdotal Insolence. But the Friar is a Character of such glaring Vice, and so strongly drawn, that a very indifferent Actor cannot but hit upon the broad Jest, that are remarkable, in every Scene of it. Though I have never yet seen any one, that has fill'd them with half the Truth, and Spirit of *Leigh*—*Leigh* rais'd the



Anthony Leigh or the Spanish Fryer

Sold by J. Smith, late of Lyon in Coventry Street. Sold Street Covent Garden.

J. Smith fecit.

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Anthony Leigh or the Spanish Fryer

J. Smith fecit.

Sold by J. Smith, at the Auction of the Crown Jewels, by the Order of the House of Commons, in the Strand, on the 1st of June 1793. Sold for the Crown at the Auction of the Crown Jewels, by the Order of the House of Commons, in the Strand, on the 1st of June 1793. II



*The Right. Hon^{ble} Charles Earle of Dorset & Middlesex;
Baron Buckhurst, Lord Chamberlain of the Household, One of the Lords of their Maj^{ties}
most Hon^{ble} Privy Councill, Lord Lieutenant of the County of Sussex, and Knight
of the most Noble Order of the Garter, &c.*

J. Kneller pinxit. D. B. del.

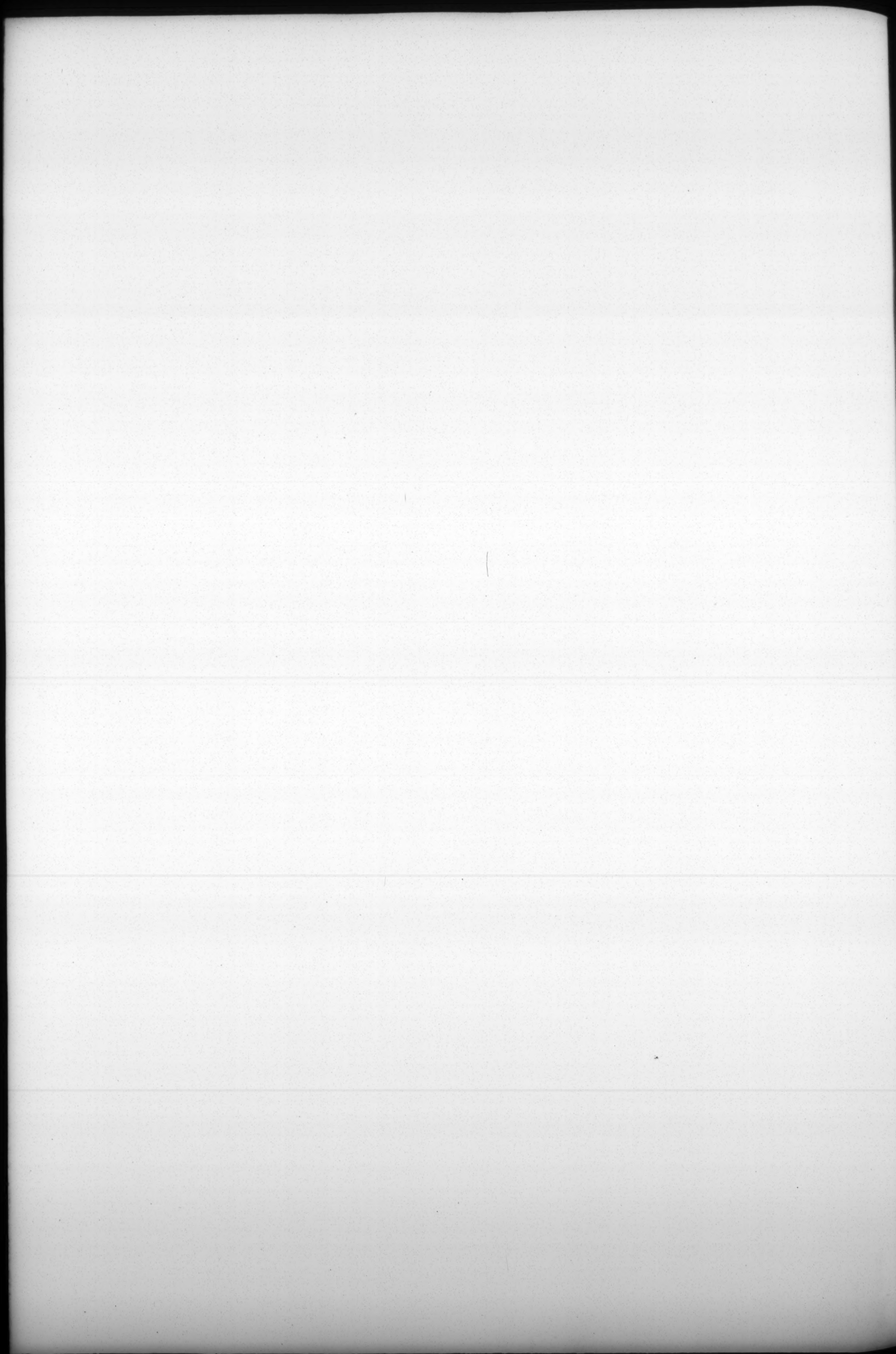
J. Smith fecit et excudit.



Se Ipse Pinx.

J. Faber fecit 1735.

J. Godfrey Kneller: Bat. & Engraver. Roman Empire
Principal Painter to St. Charles 2. James 2. William 3. & King George



the Character as much above the Poet's Imagination, as the Character has sometimes rais'd other Actors above themselves! and I do not doubt, but the Poet's Knowledge of *Leigh's* Genius help'd him to many a pleasant Stroke of Nature, which without that Knowledge never might have enter'd into his Conception. *Leigh* was so eminent in his Character, that the late Earl of *Dorset* (who was equally an Admirer, and a Judge of Theatrical Merit) had a whole Length of him, in the Friar's Habit, drawn by *Kneller*: The whole Portrait is highly painted, and extremely like him. But no wonder *Leigh* arriv'd to such Fame in what was so compleatly written for him; when Characters that would made the Reader yawn, in the Closet, have by the Strength of his Action, been lifted into the lowdest Laughter, on the Stage. Of this kind was the Scrivener's great boobily Son in the *Villain*; *Ralph*, a stupid, staring, Under-servant, in *Sir Solomon Single*. Quite opposite to those were *Sir Jolly Fumble*, in the *Soldier's Fortune*, and his old *Belfond* in the *Squire of Alfatia*. In *Sir Jolly* he was all Life, and laughing Humour; and when *Nokes* acted with him in the same Play, they returned the Ball so dextrously upon one another, that every Scene between them, seem'd but one continued Rest of Excellence——But alas! when those Actors were gone, that Comedy, and many others, for the same Reason, were rarely known to stand upon their own Legs; by seeing no more of *Leigh* or *Nokes* in them, the Characters were quite

quite funk, and alter'd. In his *Sir William Belfond*, *Leigh* shew'd a more spirited Variety, than ever I saw, any Actor, in any one Character come up to: The Poet, 'tis true, had here, exactly chalked for him, the Out-lines of Nature; but the high Colouring, the strong Lights and Shades of Humour that enliven'd the whole, and struck our Admiration, with Surprize and Delight, were wholly owing to the Actor. The easy Reader might, perhaps, have been pleas'd with the Author without discomposing a Feature; but the Spectator must have heartily held his Sides, or the Actor would have heartily made them ach for it.

Now, though I observ'd before, that *Nokes* never was tolerably touch'd by any of his Successors; yet, in this Character, I must own, I have seen *Leigh* extremely well imitated, by my late facetious Friend *Penkethman*, who tho' far short of what was inimitable, in the Original, yet as to the general Resemblance, was a very valuable Copy of him: And, as I know *Penkethman* cannot yet be out of your Memory, I have chosen to mention him here, to give you the nearest Idea I can, of the Excellence of *Leigh* in that particular Light: For *Leigh* had many masterly Variations, which the other cou'd not, nor ever pretended to reach; particularly in the Dotage, and Follies of extreme old Age, in the Characters of *Fumble* in the *Fond Husband*, and the Toothless Lawyer, in the *City Politicks*; both which Plays liv'd only by the extraordinary Performance of *Nokes* and *Leigh*.

There



E. Harding Sculp.
William Pinckethman in the Character of Don Louis in the Popes Story
From an Original Drawing by Vertue in the Collection of His Highness
Feb. 4. April 1794. by E. & S. Harding. Pall Mall.



Mr. William Penkethman. Sworn Comedian to the Queen of Great Britain.

R. Shmutz pinx.

J. Smith fecit et ex.

There were two other Characters, of the farcical kind, *Geta* in the *Prophetess*, and *Crack* in *Sir Courtly Nice*, which, as they are less confin'd to Nature, the Imitation of them was less difficult to *Penkethman*; who, to say the Truth, delighted more in the whimsical, than the natural; therefore, when I say he sometimes resembled *Leigh*, I reserve this distinction, on his Master's side; that the pleasant Extravagancies of *Leigh*, were all the Flowers of his own Fancy, while the less fertile Brain of my Friend was contented to make use of the Stock his Predecessor had left him. What I have said, therefore, is not to detract from honest *Pinky's* Merit, but to do Justice to his Predecessor.——And though, 'tis true, as we seldom see a good Actor, as a great Poet arise from the bare *Imitation* of another's Genius; yet if this be a general Rule, *Penkethman* was the nearest to an Exception from it; for with those, who never knew *Leigh*, he might very well have pass'd for a more than common Original. Yet again, as my Partiality for *Penkethman* ought not to lead me from Truth, I must beg leave (though out of its Place) to tell you fairly what was the best of him, that the Superiority of *Leigh* may stand in its due Light——*Penkethman* had certainly, from Nature, a great deal of comic Power about him; but his Judgment was by no means equal to it; for he would make frequent Deviations into the Whimsies of an *Harlequin*. By the way, (let me digress a little farther) whatever Allowan-

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ces are made for the Licence of that Character, I mean of an *Harlequin*, whatever Pretences may be urged, from the Practice of the ancient Comedy, for its being play'd in a Mask, resembling no part of the human Species; I am apt to think, the best Excuse a modern Actor can plead for his continuing it, is that the low, senseless, and monstrous things he says, and does in it, no theatrical Assurance could get through, with a bare Face: Let me give you an Instance of even *Penkethman's* being out of Countenance for want of it: When he first play'd *Harlequin* in the *Emperor* of the *Moon*, several Gentlemen (who inadvertently judg'd by the Rules of Nature) fancied that a great deal of the Drollery, and Spirit of his Grimace was lost, by his wearing that useless, unmeaning Masque of a black Cat, and therefore insisted, that the next time of his acting that Part, he should play without it: Their Desire was accordingly comply'd with—but, alas! in vain—*Penkethman* could not take to himself the Shame of the Character without being concealed—he was no more *Harlequin*—his Humour was quite disconcerted! his Conscience could not, with the same *Effronterie* declare against Nature, without the cover of that unchanging Face, which he was sure would never blush for it! no! it was quite another Case! without that Armour his Courage could not come up to the bold Strokes, that were necessary to get the better of common Sense. Now if this Circumstance will

justify the Modesty of *Penkethman*, it cannot but throw a wholesome Contempt on the low Merit of an *Harlequin*. But how further necessary the Masque is to that Fool's Coat, we have lately had a stronger Proof, in the Favour, that the *Harlequin Sauvage* met with, at *Paris*, and the ill Fate that followed the same *Sauvage*, when he pull'd off his Masque in *London*. So that it seems, what was Wit from a *Harlequin*, was something too extravagant from a human Creature. If therefore *Penkethman*, in Characters drawn from Nature, might sometimes launch out into a few gamefome Liberties, which would not have been excused from a more correct Comedian; yet, in his manner of taking them, he always seem'd to me, in a kind of Consciousness of the Hazard he was running, as if he fairly confess'd, that what he did was only, as well as he *could* do.— That he was willing to take his Chance for Success, but if he did not meet with it, a Rebuke should break no Squares; he would mend it another time, and would take whatever pleas'd his Judges to think of him, in good part; and I have often thought, that a good deal of the Favour he met with, was owing to this seeming humble way of waving all Pretences to Merit, but what the Town would please to allow him. What confirms me in this Opinion is, that when it has been his ill Fortune to meet with a *Disgraccia*, I have known him say apart to himself, yet loud enough to be heard—*Odso!* I believe I am

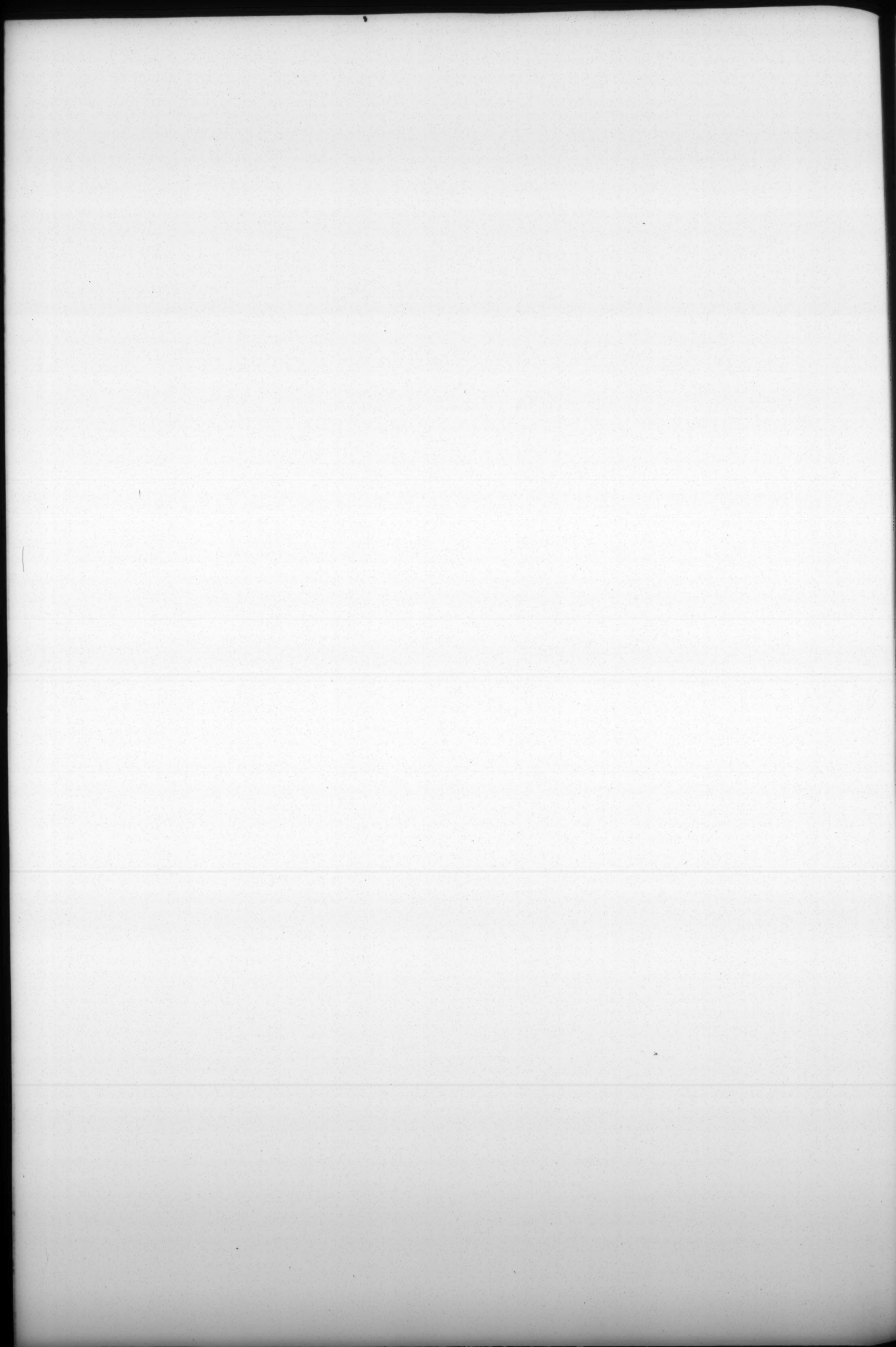
a little wrong here ! which once was so well receiv'd, by the Audience, that they turn'd their Reproof into Applause.

Now, the Judgment of *Leigh* always guarded the happier Sallies of his Fancy, from the least Hazard of Disapprobation: he seem'd not to court, but to attack your Applause, and always came off victorious; nor did his highest Assurance amount to any more, than that just Confidence, without which the commendable Spirit of every good Actor must be abated; and of this Spirit *Leigh* was a most perfect Master. He was much admir'd by King *Charles*, who us'd to distinguish him, when spoke of, by the Title of his Actor: Which however makes me imagine, that in his Exile that Prince might have receiv'd his first Impression of good Actors from the French Stage; for *Leigh* had more of that farcical Vivacity than *Nokes*; but *Nokes* was never languid by his more strict Adherence to Nature, and as far as my Judgment is worth taking, if their intrinsic Merit could be justly weigh'd, *Nokes* must have had the better in the Balance. Upon the unfortunate Death of *Monfort*, *Leigh* fell ill of a Fever, and dy'd in a Week after him, in December 1692.

Underbil was a correct, and natural Comedian, his particular Excellence was in Characters, that may be call'd Still-life, I mean the Stiff, the Heavy, and the Stupid; to these he gave the exactest, and most expressive Colours, and in some of them, look'd, as if it were



From a Picture in Brudenell Hall, London, the Original painted by S^r Peter Lely K^t Geo. Vertue Sculp. 1736.



were not in the Power of human Passions to alter a Feature of him. In the solemn Formality of *Obadiab* in the *Committee*, and in the boobily Heaviness of *Lolpopp* in the *Squire of Alsatia*, he seem'd the immoveable Log he stood for! a Countenance of Wood could not be more fixt than his, when the Blockhead of a Character required it: His Face was full and long; from his Crown to the end of his Nose, was the shorter half of it, so that the Disproportion of his lower Features, when soberly compos'd, with an unwandering Eye hanging over them, threw him into the most lumpish, moping Mortal, that ever made Beholders merry! not but, at other times, he could be wakened into Spirit equally ridiculous.——In the coarse, rustick Humour of Justice *Clodpate*, in *Epsome Wells*, he was a delightful Brute! and in the blunt Vivacity of Sir *Sampson*, in *Love for Love*, he shew'd all that true perverse Spirit, that is commonly seen in much Wit, and Ill-nature. This Character is one of those few so well written, with so much Wit and Humour, that an Actor must be the grossest Dunce, that does not appear with an unusual Life in it: But it will still shew as great a Proportion of Skill, to come near *Underhil* in the acting it, which (not to undervalue those who soon came after him) I have not yet seen. He was particularly admir'd too, for the Grave-digger in *Hamlet*. The Author of the *Tatler* recommends him to the Favour of the Town, upon that Play's being acted for

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his Benefit, wherein, after his Age had some Years oblig'd him to leave the Stage, he came on again, for that Day, to perform his old Part; but, alas! so worn, and disabled, as if himself was to have lain in the Grave he was digging; when he could no more excite Laughter, his Infirmities were dismiss'd with Pity: He dy'd soon after, a superannuated Pensioner, in the List of those who, were supported by the joint Sharers, under the first Patent granted to Sir Richard Steele.

The deep Impressions of these excellent Actors, which I receiv'd in my Youth, I am afraid, may have drawn me into the common Foible of us old Fellows; which is, a Fondness, and perhaps, a tedious Partiality for the Pleasures we have formerly tasted, and think are now fallen off, because we can no longer enjoy them. If therefore I lie under that Suspicion, tho' I have related nothing incredible, or out of the reach of a good Judge's Conception, I must appeal to those Few, who are about my own Age, for the Truth and Likeness of these Theatrical Portraits.

There were, at this time, several others in some degree of Favour with the Publick, *Powel, Verbruggen, Williams, &c.* But as I cannot think their best Improvements made them, in any wise equal to those I have spoke of, I ought not to range them in the same Class. Neither were *Wilks*, or *Dogget*, yet come to the Stage; nor was *Both* initiated till about six Years after them; or Mrs. *Oldfield* known,



G. Kellier Bar^d Pinxt

J. Faber fecit 1733.

S^r Richard



Steele Kn.

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G. Kellier Bar^t Pinxt

J. Faber fecit 1733.

L. Richard



Steele. Esq.



known, till the Year 1700. I must therefore reserve the four last for their proper Period, and proceed to the Actresses, that were famous with *Betterton*, at the latter end of the last Century.

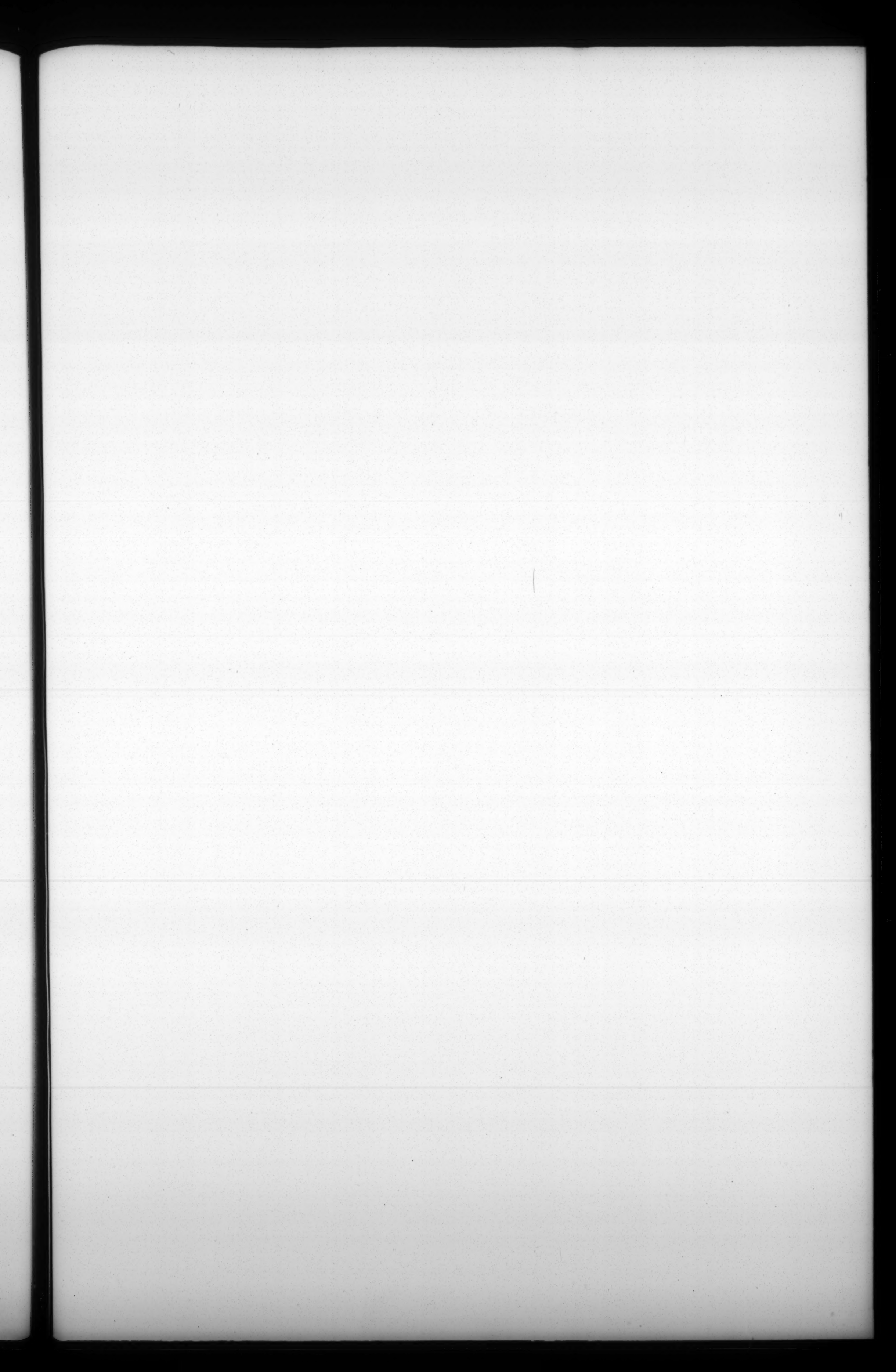
Mrs. *Barry* was then in possession of almost all the chief Parts in Tragedy: With what Skill she gave Life to them, you will judge from the Words of *Dryden*, in his Preface to *Cleomenes*, where he says,

Mrs. Barry, always excellent, has in this Tragedy excell'd herself, and gain'd a Reputation beyond any Woman I have ever seen on the Theatre.

I very perfectly remember her acting that Part; and however unnecessary it may seem, to give my Judgment after *Dryden's*, I cannot help saying, I do not only close with his Opinion, but will venture to add, that (tho' *Dryden* has been dead these Thirty-Eight Years) the same Compliment, to this Hour, may be due to her Excellence. And tho' she was then, not a little, past her Youth, she was not, till that time, fully arriv'd to her Maturity of Power and Judgment: From whence I would observe, That the short Life of Beauty, is not long enough to form a complete Actress. In Men, the Delicacy of Person is not so absolutely necessary, nor the Decline of it so soon taken notice of. The same Mrs. *Barry* arriv'd to, is a particular Proof of the Difficulty there is, in judging with Certainty, from
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their first Trials, whether young People will ever make any great Figure on a Theatre. There was, it seems, so little Hopes of Mrs. Barry, at her first setting out, that she was, at the end of the first Year, discharg'd the Company, among others, that were thought to be a useless Expence to it. I take it for granted that the Objection to Mrs. Barry, at that time, must have been a defective Ear, or some unskilful Dissonance, in her manner of pronouncing: But where there is a proper Voice, and Person, with the Addition of a good Understanding, Experience tells us, that such Defect is not always invincible; of which, not only Mrs. Barry, but the late Mrs. Oldfield, are eminent Instances. Mrs. Oldfield had been a Year, in the Theatre-Royal, before she was observ'd to give any tolerable Hope of her being an Actress; so unlike, to all manner of Propriety, was her Speaking! How unaccountably, then, does a Genius for the Stage make its way towards Perfection? For, notwithstanding these equal Disadvantages, both these Actresses, tho' of different Excellence, made themselves complete Mistresses of their Art, by the Prevalence of their Understanding. If this Observation may be of any use, to the Masters of future Theatres, I shall not then have made it to no purpose.

Mrs. Barry, in Characters of Greatness, had a Presence of elevated Dignity, her Mien and Motion superb, and gracefully majestick; her Voice full, clear, and strong, so that no Violence





M. Deal pinx.

In the Possession of Gilbert West Esq.

Impressus J. & P. Knapton Londini 1792.

J. H. Knapton sculp. Faint. 1792.

lence of Passion could be too much for her : And when Distress, or Tenderneſs poſſeſſed her, ſhe ſubſided into the moſt affecting Melody, and Softneſs. In the Art of exciting Pity, ſhe had a Power beyond all the Actreſſes I have yet ſeen, or what your Imagination can conceive. Of the former of theſe two great Excellencies, ſhe gave the moſt delightful Proofs in almoſt all the Heroic Plays of *Dryden* and *Lee* ; and of the latter, in the ſofter Paſſions of *Otway's* *Monimia* and *Belvidera*. In Scenes of Anger, Deſiance, or Reſentment, while ſhe was impetuous, and terrible, ſhe pour'd out the Sentiment with an enchanting Harmony ; and it was this particular Excellence, for which *Dryden* made her the above-recited Compliment, upon her acting *Cassandra* in his *Cleomenes*. But here, I am apt to think his Partiality for that Character, may have tempted his Judgment to let it paſs for her Maſter-piece ; when he could not but know, there were ſeveral other Characters in which her Action might have given her a fairer Pretence to the Praise he has beſtow'd on her, for *Cassandra* ; for, in no Part of that, is there the leaſt ground for Compaſſion, as in *Monimia* ; nor equal cauſe for Admiration, as in the nobler Love of *Cleopatra*, or the tempeſtuous Jealouſy of *Roxana*. 'Twas in theſe Lights, I thought Mrs. Barry ſhone with a much brighter Excellence than in *Cassandra*. She was the firſt Perſon whoſe Merit was diſtinguiſhed, by the Indulgence of having an annual



M. Deal pinx.

In the Possession of Gilbert West Esq.

Impensis I. & P. Knapton Londini 1741

J. Houbroek sculp. Amst. 1741.

lence of Passion could be too much for her: And when Distress, or Tenderneſs poſſeſſed her, ſhe ſubſided into the moſt affecting Melody, and Softneſs. In the Art of exciting Pity, ſhe had a Power beyond all the Actreſſes I have yet ſeen, or what your Imagination can conceive. Of the former of theſe two great Excellencies, ſhe gave the moſt delightful Proofs in almoſt all the Heroic Plays of *Dryden* and *Lee*; and of the latter, in the ſofter Paſſions of *Otway's* *Monimia* and *Bekvidera*. In Scenes of Anger, Deſiance, or Reſentment, while ſhe was impetuous, and terrible, ſhe pour'd out the Sentiment with an enchanting Harmony; and it was this particular Excellence, for which *Dryden* made her the above-recited Compliment, upon her acting *Cassandra* in his *Cleomenes*. But here, I am apt to think his Partiality for that Character, may have tempted his Judgment to let it paſs for her Maſter-piece; when he could not but know, there were ſeveral other Characters in which her Action might have given her a fairer Pretence to the Praise he has beſtow'd on her, for *Cassandra*; for, in no Part of that, is there the leaſt ground for Compaſſion, as in *Monimia*; nor equal cauſe for Admiration, as in the nobler Love of *Cleopatra*, or the tempeſtuous Jealouſy of *Reſiana*. 'Twas in theſe Lights, I thought Mrs. *Barry* ſhone with a much brighter Excellence than in *Cassandra*. She was the firſt Perſon whoſe Merit was diſtinguiſhed, by the Indulgence of having an annual

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nual Benefit-Play, which was granted to her alone, if I mistake not, first in King *James's* time, and which became not common to others, till the Division of this Company, after the Death of King *William's* Queen *Mary*. This great Actress dy'd of a Fever, towards the latter end of Queen *Anne*; the Year I have forgot; but perhaps you will recollect it, by an Expression that fell from her in blank Verse, in her last Hours, when she was delirious, *viz.*

Ha, ha! and so they make us Lords, by Dozens!

Mrs. *Betterton*, tho' far advanc'd in Years, was so great a Mistress of Nature, that even Mrs. *Barry*, who acted the Lady *Macbeth* after her, could not in that Part, with all her superior Strength, and Melody of Voice, throw out those quick and careless Strokes of Terror, from the Disorder of a guilty Mind, which the other gave us, with a Facility in her Manner, that render'd them at once tremendous, and delightful. Time could not impair her Skill, tho' he had brought her Person to decay. She was, to the last, the Admiration of all true Judges of Nature, and Lovers of *Shakspear*, in whose Plays she chiefly excell'd, and without a Rival. When she quitted the Stage, several good Actresses were the better for her Instruction. She was a Woman of an unblemish'd, and sober Life; and had the Honour to teach Queen *Anne*, when Princess, the Part of *Semandra* in *Mitbridates*, which

†

she



G. Kneller Bar. & Pinx.

J. Faber Fecit

Serenissima. Maria D. G. Angl. Fran: & Hib. Regina.

London Printed for & sold by Rob. Sayer at the Golden Ball opposite to Bell's Lane Fleet Street, & Th. King at the Globe in the Foulrey.

134 *The LIFE of*

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*Serenissima et Potentissima Anna D. G. Anglia Scotia Francia et
Hibernia Regina &c. Inaugurata XXIII.^o die Aprilis. Anno 1702.*

G. Kneller S. R. Imp. et Angl. Eques Aur. pinx.

J. Smith fec.

Sold by J. Smith at J. Lyon & Co. in Russel street Covent-Garden

she acted at Court in King *Charles's* time. After the Death of Mr. *Betterton*, her Husband, that Princess, when Queen, order'd her a Pension for Life, but she lived not to receive more than the first half Year of it.

Mrs. *Leigh*, the Wife of *Leigh* already mention'd, had a very droll way of dressing the pretty Foibles of superannuated Beauties. She had, in herself, a good deal of Humour, and knew how to infuse it into the affected Mothers, Aunts, and modest stale Maids, that had miss'd their Market; of this sort were the Modish Mother in the *Chances*, affecting to be politely commode, for her own Daughter; the Coquette Prude of an Aunt, in *Sir Courtly Nice*, who prides herself in being chaste, and cruel, at Fifty; and the languishing Lady *Wishfort*, in *The Way of the World*: In all these, with many others, she was extremely entertaining, and painted, in a lively manner, the blind Side of Nature.

Mrs. *Butler*, who had her Christian Name of *Charlotte* given her by King *Charles*, was the Daughter of a decayed Knight, and had the Honour of that Prince's Recommendation to the Theatre; a provident Restitution, giving to the Stage in kind, what he had sometimes taken from it: The Publick, at least, was obliged by it; for she prov'd not only a good Actress, but was allow'd in those Days, to sing and dance to great Perfection. In the Dramatick Operas of *Dioclesian*, and that of *King Arthur*, she was a capital, and admired

Performer. In speaking too, she had a sweet-ton'd Voice, which, with her naturally genteel Air, and sensible Pronunciation, render'd her wholly Mistress of the Amiable, in many serious Characters. In Parts of Humour too she had a manner of blending her assuasive Softness, even with the Gay, the Lively, and the Alluring. Of this she gave an agreeable Instance, in her Action of the (*Villars*) Duke of *Buckingham's* second *Constantia* in the *Chances*. In which, if I should say, I have never seen her exceeded, I might still do no wrong to the late Mrs. *Oldfield's* lively Performance of the same Character. Mrs. *Oldfield's* Fame may spare Mrs. *Butler's* Action this Compliment, without the least Diminution, or Dispute of her Superiority, in Characters of more Moment.

Here I cannot help observing, when there was but one Theatre in *London*, at what unequal Sallaries, compar'd to those of later Days, the hired Actors were then held, by the absolute Authority of their frugal Masters, the Patentees; for Mrs. *Butler* had then but Forty Shillings a Week, and could she have obtain'd an Addition of Ten Shillings more (which was refused her) would never have left their Service; but being offer'd her own Conditions, to go with Mr. *Aspbury* to *Dublin* (who was then raising a Company of Actors for that Theatre, where there had been none since the Revolution) her Discontent, here, prevail'd with her to accept of his Offer, and
he



*George, Duke, Marquess and Earle of
Buckingham, Earle of Coventry, &c.*



he found his Account in her Value. Were not those Patentees most sagacious Oeconomists, that could lay hold on so notable an Expedient, to lessen their Charge? How gladly, in my time of being a Sharer, would we have given four times her Income, to an Actress of equal Merit?

Mrs. *Monfort*, whose second Marriage gave her the Name of *Verbruggen*, was Mistress of more variety of Humour, than I ever knew in any one Woman Actress. This variety too, was attended with an equal Vivacity, which made her excellent in Characters extremely different. As she was naturally a pleasant Mimick, she had the Skill to make that Talent useful on the Stage, a Talent which may be surprising in a Conversation, and yet be lost when brought to the Theatre, which was the Case of *Ejlcourt* already mention'd: But where the Elocution is round, distinct, voluble, and various, as Mrs. *Monfort's* was, the Mimick, there, is a great Assistant to the Actor. Nothing, tho' ever so barren, if within the Bounds of Nature, could be flat in her Hands. She gave many heightening Touches to Characters but coldly written, and often made an Author vain of his Work, that in it self had but little Merit. She was so fond of Humour, in what low Part soever to be found, that she would make no scruple of defacing her fair Form, to come heartily into it; for when she was eminent in several desirable Characters of Wit, and Humour, in higher Life, she would be, in as

much Fancy, when descending into the antiquated *Abigail*, of *Fletcher*, as when triumphing in all the *Airs*, and vain Graces of a fine Lady; a Merit, that few Actresses care for. In a Play of *Durfee's*, now forgotten, call'd, *The Western Lass*, which Part she acted, she transform'd her whole Being, Body, Shape, Voice, Language, Look, and Features, into almost another Animal; with a strong *Devonshire* Dialect, a broad laughing Voice, a poking Head, round Shoulders, an unconceiving Eye, and the most be-diz'ning, dowdy Dress, that ever cover'd the untrain'd Limbs of a *Joan Trot*. To have seen her here, you would have thought it impossible the same Creature could ever have been recover'd, to what was as easy to her, the Gay, the Lively, and the Desirable. Nor was her Humour limited, to her Sex; for, while her Shape permitted, she was a more adroit pretty Fellow, than is usually seen upon the Stage: Her easy Air, Action, Mien, and Gesture, quite chang'd from the Quoit, to the cock'd Hat, and Cavalier in fashion. People were so fond of seeing her a Man, that when the Part of *Bays* in the *Rehearsal*, had, for some time, lain dormant, she was desired to take it up, which I have seen her act with all the true, coxcomby Spirit, and Humour, that the Sufficiency of the Character required.

But what found most Employment for her whole various Excellence at once, was the Part of *Melantha*, in *Marriage-Alamode*. *Melantha* is as finish'd an Impertinent, as ever flutter'd
in



THOMAS D'URFEY
POETA LYRICUS.



in a Drawing-room, and seems to contain the most compleat System of Female Foppery, that could possibly be crowded into the tortured Form of a Fine Lady. Her Language, Dress, Motion, Manners, Soul, and Body, are in a continual Hurry to be something more, than is necessary, or commendable. And though I doubt it will be a vain Labour, to offer you a just Likeness of Mrs. *Monfort's* Action, yet the fantastick Impression is still so strong in my Memory, that I cannot help saying something, tho' fantastickly, about it. The first ridiculous Airs that break from her, are, upon a Gallant, never seen before, who delivers her a Letter from her Father, recommending him to her good Graces, as an honourable Lover. Here now, one would think she might naturally shew a little of the Sex's decent Reserve, tho' never so slightly cover'd! No, Sir; not a Tittle of it; Modesty is the Virtue of a poor-soul'd Country Gentlewoman; she is too much a Court Lady, to be under so vulgar a Confusion; she reads the Letter, therefore, with a careless, dropping Lip, and an erected Brow, humming it hastily over, as if she were impatient to out-go her Father's Commands, by making a compleat Conquest of him at once; and that the Letter might not embarrass her Attack, crack! she crumbles it at once, into her Palm, and pours upon him her whole Artillery of Airs, Eyes and Motion; down goes her dainty, diving Body, to the Ground, as if she were sinking under the conscious Load of her own Attractions;

tractions; then launches into a Flood of fine Language, and Compliment, still playing her Chest forward in fifty Falls and Risings, like a Swan upon waving Water; and, to complete her Impertinence, she is so rapidly fond of her own Wit, that she will not give her Lover Leave to praise it: Silent assenting Bows, and vain Endeavours to speak, are all the share of the Conversation he is admitted to, which, at last, he is relieved from, by her Engagement to half a Score Visits, which she *swims* from him to make, with a Promise to return in a Twinkling.

If this Sketch has Colour enough to give you any near Conception of her, I then need only tell you, that throughout the whole Character, her variety of Humour was every way proportionable; as, indeed, in most Parts, that she thought worth her care, or that had the least Matter for her Fancy to work upon, I may justly say, That no Actress, from her own Conception, could have heighten'd them with more lively Strokes of Nature.

I come now to the last, and only living Person, of all those whose Theatrical Characters I have promised you, Mrs. *Bracegirdle*; who, I know, would rather pass her remaining Days forgotten, as an Actress, than to have her Youth recollected in the most favourable Light I am able to place it; yet, as she is essentially necessary to my Theatrical History, and as I only bring her back to the Company of those, with whom she pass'd the Spring and Summer
of

of her Life, I hope it will excuse the Liberty I take, in commemorating the Delight which the Publick received from her Appearance, while she was an Ornament to the Theatre.

Mrs. *Bracegirdle* was now, but just blooming to her Maturity; her Reputation, as an Actress, gradually rising with that of her Person; never any Woman was in such general Favour of her Spectators, which, to the last Scene of her Dramatick Life, she maintain'd, by not being unguarded in her private Character. This Discretion contributed, not a little, to make her the *Cara*, the Darling of the Theatre: For it will be no extravagant thing to say, Scarce an Audience saw her, that were less than half of them Lovers, without a suspected Favourite among them: And tho' she might be said to have been the Universal Passion, and under the highest Temptations; her Constancy in resisting them, served but to increase the Number of her Admirers: And this perhaps you will more easily believe, when I extend not my Encomiums on her Person, beyond a Sincerity that can be suspected; for she had no greater Claim to Beauty, than what the most desirable *Brunette* might pretend to. But her Youth, and lively Aspect, threw out such a Glow of Health, and Chearfulness, that, on the Stage, few Spectators that were not past it, could behold her without Desire. It was even a Fashion among the Gay, and Young, to have a Taste or *Tendre* for Mrs. *Bracegirdle*. She inspired the best Authors to write for her, and

two of them, when they gave her a Lover, in a Play, seem'd palpably to plead their own Passions, and make their private Court to her, in fictitious Characters. In all the chief Parts she acted, the Desirable was so predominant, that no Judge could be cold enough to consider, from what other particular Excellence, she became delightful. To speak critically of an Actress, that was extremely good, were as hazardous, as to be positive in one's Opinion of the best Opera Singer. People often judge by Comparison, where there is no Similitude, in the Performance. So that, in this case, we have only Taste to appeal to, and of Taste there can be no disputing. I shall therefore only say of Mrs. *Bracegirdle*, That the most eminent Authors always chose her for their favourite Character, and shall leave that uncontested Proof of her Merit to its own Value. Yet let me say, there were two very different Characters, in which she acquitted herself with uncommon Applause: If any thing could excuse that desperate Extravagance of Love, that almost frantick Passion of *Lee's Alexander the Great*, it must have been, when Mrs. *Bracegirdle* was his *Statira*: As when she acted *Millamant*, all the Faults, Follies, and Affectation of that agreeable Tyrant, were venially melted down into so many Charms, and Attractions of a conscious Beauty. In other Characters, where Singing was a necessary Part of them, her Voice and Action gave a Pleasure, which

which good Sense, in those Days, was not asham'd to give Praise to.

She retir'd from the Stage in the Height of her Favour from the Publick, when most of her Cotemporaries, whom she had been bred up with, were declining, in the Year 1710, nor could she be perswaded to return to it, under new Masters, upon the most advantageous Terms, that were offered her; excepting one Day, about a Year after, to assist her good Friend, Mr. *Betterton*, when she play'd *Angelica*, in *Love for Love*, for his Benefit. She has still the Happiness to retain her usual Cheerfulness, and to be, without the transitory Charm of Youth, agreeable.

If, in my Account of these memorable Actors, I have not deviated from Truth, which, in the least Article, I am not conscious of, may we not venture to say, They had not their Equals, at any one Time, upon any Theatre in *Europe*? Or, if we confine the Comparison, to that of *France alone*, I believe no other Stage can be much disparag'd, by being left out of the question; which cannot properly be decided, by the single Merit of any one Actor; whether their *Baron* or our *Betterton*, might be the Superior, (take which Side you please) that Point reaches, either way, but to a thirteenth part of what I contend for, viz. That no Stage, at any one Period, could shew thirteen Actors, standing all in equal Lights of Excellence, in their Profession: And I am the bolder, in this Challenge, to any other

other Nation, because no Theatre having so extended a Variety of natural Characters, as the *English*, can have a Demand for Actors of such various Capacities; why then, where they could not be equally wanted, should we suppose them, at any one time, to have existed?

How imperfect soever this copious Account of them may be, I am not without Hope, at least, it may in some degree shew, what Talents are requisite to make Actors valuable: And if that may any ways inform, or assist the Judgment of future Spectators, it may, as often, be of service to their publick Entertainments; for as their Hearers are, so will Actors be; worse, or better, as the false, or true Taste applauds, or discommends them. Hence only can our Theatres improve, or must degenerate.

There is another Point, relating to the hard Condition of those who write for the Stage, which I would recommend to the Consideration of their Hearers; which is, that the extreme Severity with which they damn a bad Play, seems too terrible a Warning to those whose untried Genius might hereafter give them a good one: Whereas it might be a Temptation, to a latent Author, to make the Experiment, could he be sure that, though not approved, his Muse might, at least, be dismiss'd with Decency: But the Vivacity of our modern Criticks, is of late grown so riotous, that an unsuccessful Author has no more Mercy shewn him, than a notorious Cheat, in a Pillory;

ry; every Fool, the lowest Member of the Mob, becomes a Wit, and will have a fling at him. They come now to a new Play, like Hounds to a Carcase, and are all in a full Cry, sometimes for an Hour together, before the Curtain rises to throw it amongst them. Sure, those Gentlemen cannot but allow, that a Play condemned after a fair Hearing, falls with thrice the Ignominy, as when it is refused that common Justice.

But when their critical Interruptions grow so loud, and of so long a Continuance, that the Attention of quiet People (though not so complete Criticks) is terrify'd, and the Skill of the Actors quite disconcerted by the Tumult, the Play then seems rather to fall by Assassins, than by a lawful Sentence. Is it possible that such Auditors can receive Delight, or think it any Praise to them, to prosecute so injurious, so unmanly a Treatment? And tho' perhaps the Compassionate, on the other side (who know they have as good a Right to clap, and support, as others have to catcall, damn, and destroy,) may oppose this Oppression; their Good-nature, alas! contributes little to the Redress; for in this sort of Civil War, the unhappy Author, like a good Prince, while his Subjects are at mortal Variance, is sure to be a Loser by a Victory on either Side; for still the Commonwealth, his Play, is, during the Conflict, torn to pieces. While this is the Case, while the Theatre is so turbulent a Sea, and so infested with Pirates, what Poetical Merchant,

of any Substance, will venture to trade in it? If these valiant Gentlemen pretend to be Lovers of Plays, why will they deter Gentlemen, from giving them such as are fit for Gentlemen to see? In a word, this new Race of Criticks seem to me, like the Lion-Whelps in the *Tower*, who are so boisterously gamesome at their Meals, that they dash down the Bowls of Milk, brought for their own Breakfast.

As a good Play is certainly the most rational, and the highest Entertainment, that Human Invention can produce, let that be my Apology (if I need any) for having thus freely deliver'd my Mind, in behalf of those Gentlemen, who, under such calamitous Hazards, may hereafter be reduced to write for the Stage, whose Case I shall compassionate, from the same Motive, that prevail'd on *Dido*, to assist the *Trojans* in Distress.

Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco .Virg.

Or, as *Dryden* has it,

I learn to pity Woes so like my own.

If those particular Gentlemen have sometimes made me the humbled Object of their Wit, and Humour, their Triumph at least has done me this involuntary Service, that it has driven me a Year or two sooner into a quiet Life, than otherwise, my own want of Judgment might have led me to: I left the Stage, before my Strength left me; and tho' I came to it again, for some few Days, a Year or two

